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page fifteen

UVSS elections

pages four & five

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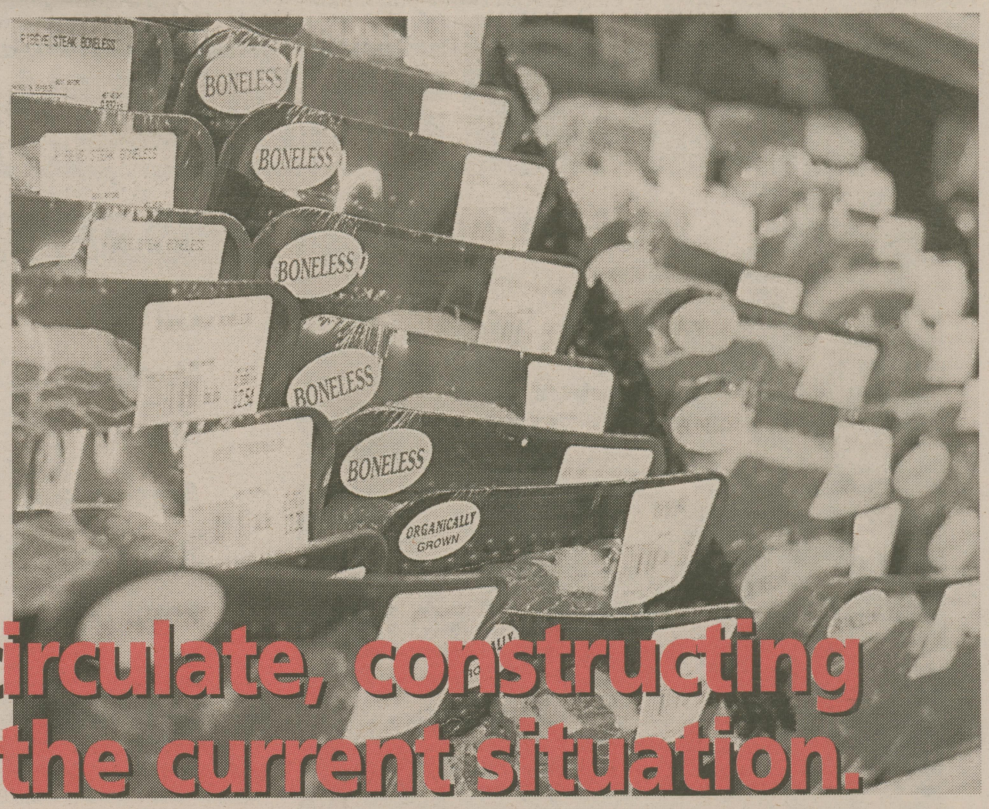
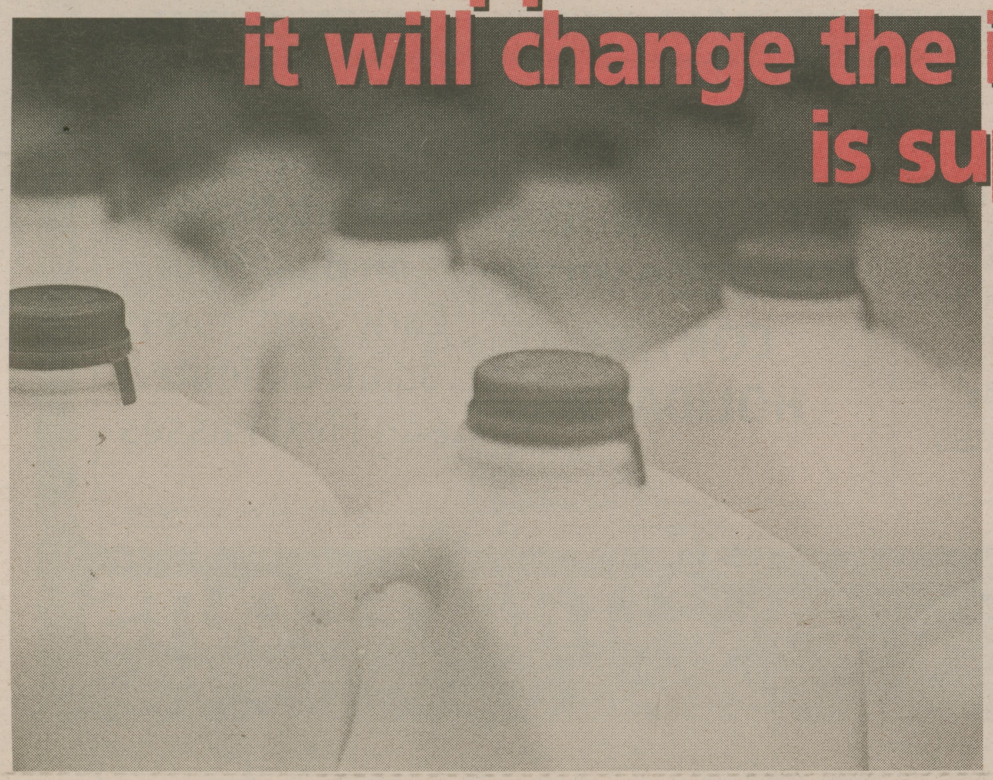
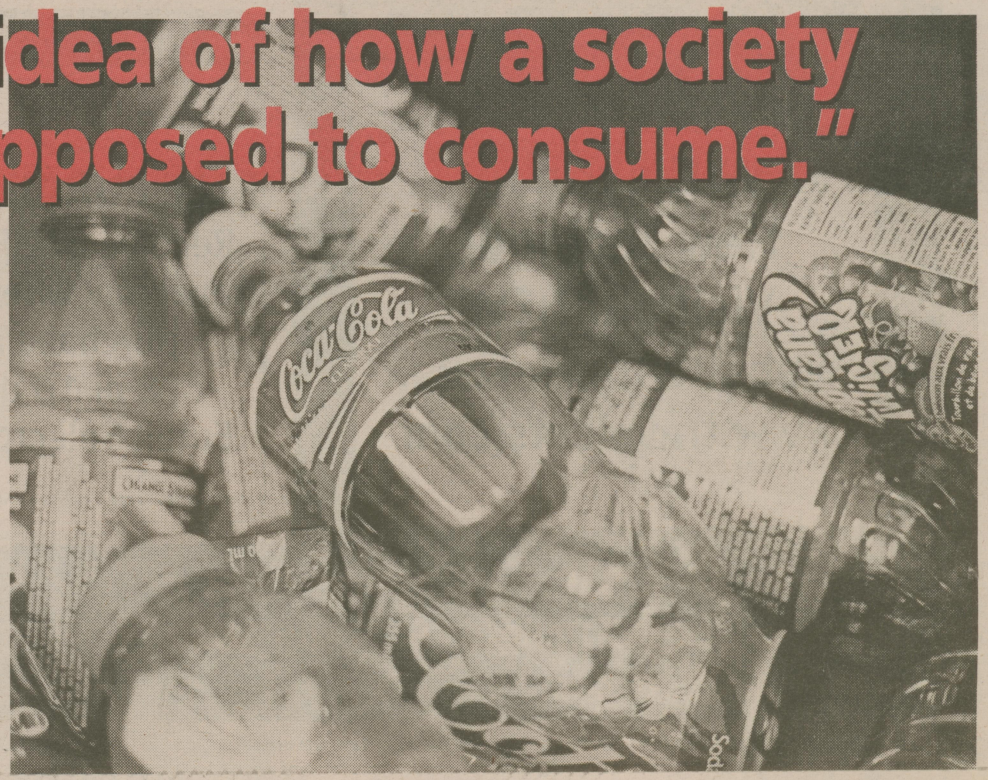


"eventually ideas circulate, constructing opposition to the current situation. it will change the idea of how a society is supposed to consume."





Queer Eye for the kids

U.S. government, religious groups worry about sexual identity in cartoon characters—Canada cool with it

by David Karp

A children's television show that aired locally has raised "serious concerns" from government agencies south of the border. Canadian viewers, on the other hand, haven't generated so much as a single complaint.

Postcards from Buster features Buster, a rabbit who first appeared in the *Arthur* series, who visits friends across the United States. In an episode titled "Sugartime," Buster searches for the perfect Mother's Day gift and meets his friends' parents, who are lesbians.

The show, which is produced and shown by PBS, aired Feb. 11 in Victoria on KCTS (channel 19). PBS left the decision of whether or not to air the show up to each local network.

In a letter to the president of PBS, US Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings was critical of the "Sugartime" episode. "Many parents would not want their young children exposed to the lifestyles portrayed in this episode," Spellings wrote. She questioned whether the episode should have received federal funding.

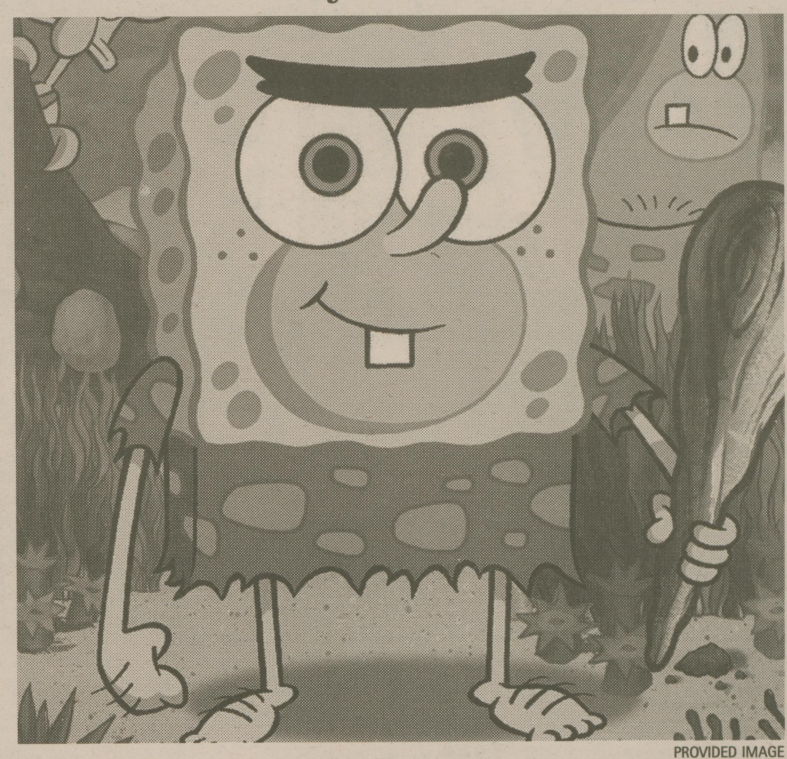
However, others disagree. Elizabeth Coté, a national senior publicist for WGBH (the PBS station that produces *Postcards from Buster*) downplayed the importance of the lesbian parents, saying that Buster was simply introduced to them. "The mother's relationship is never talked about. It's literally just, 'These are my two moms.'"

Buster also appears in a music video to the Sister Sledge song "We Are Family." The video features popular characters from shows including *Barney and Friends, Sesame Street* and *SpongeBob SquarePants.* Some religious groups have objected to the video, which will be distributed to 61,000 elementary schools across the U.S. this month, as they feel it promotes homosexuality. The video's producers, We Are Family Foundation (WAFF), posted a pledge on their website which promotes tolerance towards "sexual identity."

Christopher Cerf, a former editor and songwriter for *Sesame Street,* produced the video. "Rev. Dobson [president of Focus on the Family, a conservative religious group] found out about this and noted that SpongeBob was in it, and they found a tolerance pledge on our website which includes references . . . to sexual identity," Cerf told *the Martlet.* "That's partly when this whole flap started."

In a statement released this month, Dobson referred to the video's agenda as "sinister" and clarified that "the problem is not with SpongeBob or the other cartoon characters. It is with the way they will be used in the classroom."

Charley Beresford, a Greater Victoria School Board trustee, feels that tolerance should be brought into the classroom. She estimates that nearly half of all 15-year-old gay high school students have attempted suicide. "That's clearly not acceptable," said Beresford, who claims Victoria is the first school board in the province to specifically recognize sexual orientation in their anti-discrimination policy.



PROVIDED IMAGE

Cartoon characters like SpongeBob have U.S. groups up in arms after the characters appeared in a music video promoting tolerance.

Cerf stressed that homosexuality was not a central theme in the video, which can be viewed on WAFF's website. The video was produced in response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. "It was really inspired by the fact that there was a lot of . . . hate language going on about Muslims being responsible for attacking things," Cerf said.

He believes characters in children's shows should represent all walks of life but that sexuality should not be stressed. Cerf supported the *Postcards from Buster* episode. "Just showing . . . that [the lesbian couple] were cool people that were doing something neat and that they had a loving family—that's an important message."

UVic education professor Wanda Boyer asks if it's possible for gay characters on TV to influence kids. "Theorists like Bandura [an award-winning psychologist] would say that role models valued by the child could influence behaviour," she said.

Not all religious groups, however, oppose showing same-sex couples in children's TV shows. Henri Lock, the United Church chaplain at UVic, believes that so-called controversies receive too much hype. "I think a lot of this stuff is more whipped up by media for some excitement," Lock said. "It's sensationalism. And that's what you're involved in by whipping it up even further."

Indeed, homosexuality and kids' shows haven't seemed to raise a big fuss in Canada. The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC) examines complaints of television viewers and so far has not received any formal complaints about homosexuality with regard to children's television shows.

YTV, Canada's leading children's network, says they do not focus on sexual content when they make programming decisions. However, Heather Kearny, a spokesperson for YTV, said they make "every effort to showcase programming for and about our wide-ranging Canadian audience."

As for the big question about SpongeBob's sexuality, no one's really sure. "Anything can be a gay icon. And it's not to do with whether or not they're gay," said Shauna Logue, UVic Pride chairperson.

Thinking of anatomy, Cerf added, "I would just remind you that he's a sponge."

In the end, does the sexual orientation and preference of SpongeBob, Tinky Winky, or Bert and Ernie really matter? "Children's television is the only place where all people are created equal and differences are celebrated," said Boyer. "Perhaps we should all aim for these higher goals."

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Civil rights leader champions advocacy

'Let's talk differenly about ourselves: We are people with disabilities–let's acknowledge and validate it'

by Bryna Hallam

When Jim Derksen was six years old, a polio epidemic spread through his community. The disease left him in an iron lung—he describes it as a metal can over the torso that forced air in and out of the lungs—for four months because he was unable to breathe on his own.

One day he and two other six-year-old boys, also in iron lungs, were sitting together when the motor of one of the contraptions caught on fire. With their breathing hindered, the boys were unable to raise their voices above the sound of the breathing apparatuses to call for help. It was only by calling out in unison that they were able to get someone's attention.

"That was an interesting lesson," he said, "about there being strength in numbers."

It is a lesson that he hasn't forgotten.

More than 50 years later, Derksen is one of the leaders of the disability rights movement nationally and globally. He is the founder of Disabled Peoples International and is one of the co-founders of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD), a coalition of 15 organizations representing more than 250,000 people.

"Our primary purpose is policy advocacy," said Derksen of CCD, stressing that the group is self-representational. All organizations affiliated with CCD must meet certain criteria. For example, the majority of its voting members and its governing body must be individuals with disabilities.

It is this way that CCD differs from many other disability groups—including the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)—which Derksen categorizes as "service providers."

He believes that the service providers arose in a time when charity and "care" were the order of the day around disabilities, and that these roots can still be seen in the way they operate today.

"Service providers typically aren't controlled by people with disabilities," he said, but he "respects and understands the need for them."

In general, the different groups get along. "[The CCD] has a friendly relationship with most of the service providers," he said. "We try not to [argue] with organizations that help people."

And most service providers, he says, now take their lead from CCD and people with disabilities in general. "They recognize our inherent right to represent our interests," he said.

This wasn't always the case.

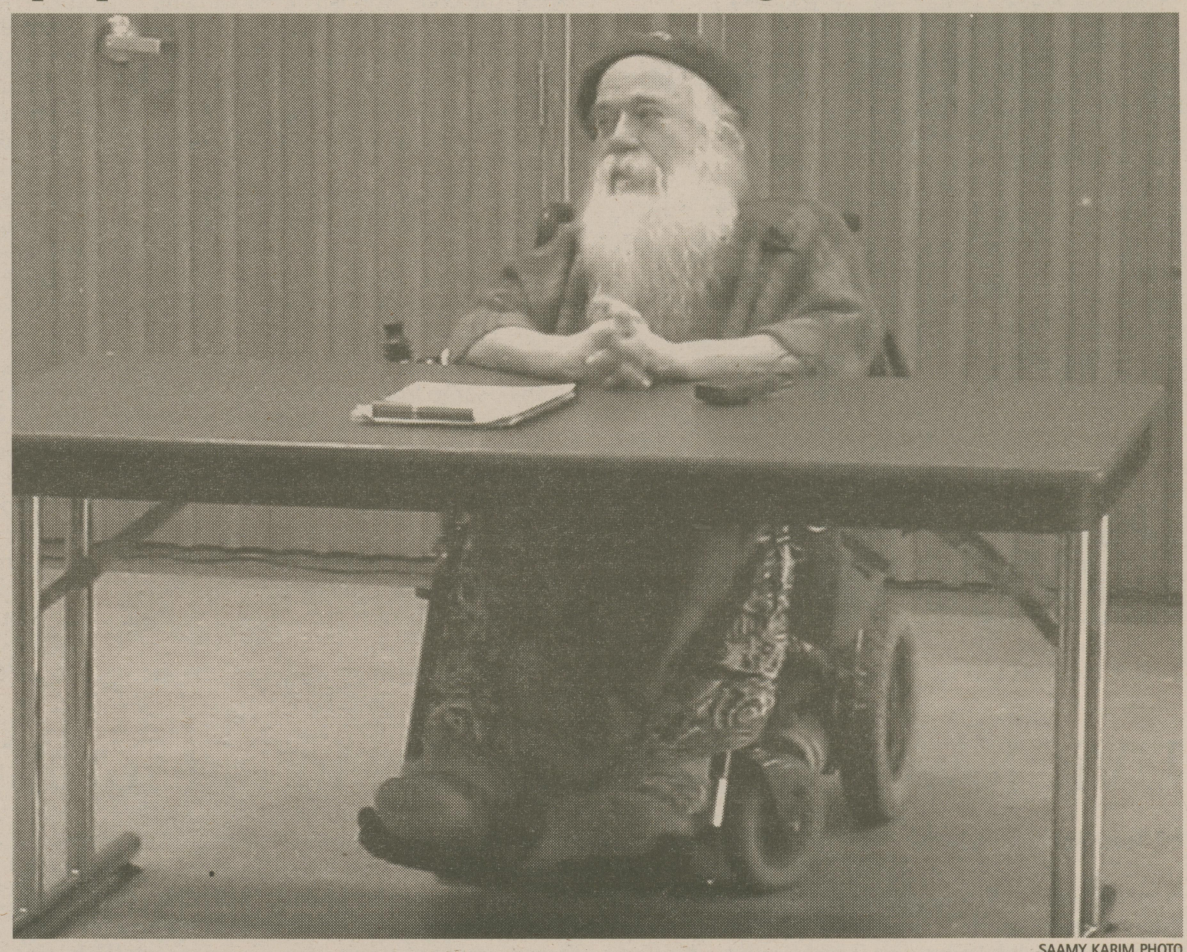
According to Derksen, people with disabilities were historically cast in the role of the beggar, as people who needed to be "trained and propped up."

The disability movement has its roots in the civil rights movement of the '60s. People with disabilities began to see their role as socially constructed. Things began to change.

"We said, 'Let's talk differently about ourselves. We are people with disabilities—let's acknowledge and validate it.'"

The CCD was founded in 1976 as the Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped (COPOH). "When we formed our organization," said Derksen, "we had to claim our voice." Until then, he says, "somebody was talking for us—always with good will but sometimes with negative outcomes."

As a result, the service providers were often the ones consulted by government about issues surrounding disabilities. It wasn't until people with disabilities could influence public opinion that they got the ear of the government.



SAAMY KARIM PHOTO

Jim Derksen founded Council of Canadians with Disabilities and helped initiate the disability rights movement in Canada.

Among the gains the disability rights movement has won is the inclusion of "disability" in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"We really tried to get into the charter," said Derksen. "It was a very important achievement and a difficult struggle. We won it."

The United Nations is also working on a Convention of the Rights of Disabled People, similar to other conventions in place on the rights of children and women.

But the fight is far from over.

Figures collected by CCD show that between 15 and 17 per cent of Canadians acknowledge that they have a disability. Nearly 50 per cent of these people have jobs, meaning they pay taxes and have purchasing power—they are not, as some might believe, simply receiving charity from the state.

Derksen points out that the actual number is probably higher since stigmas still surround some disabilities such as learning and psychiatric disabilities.

"We tend to see ourselves as more marginalized than the numbers indicate," said Derksen. "We need to make some movement as a group to see ourselves as an important part of society."

He also points out that the disability rights movement will need to force the issues into people's perspective. "We're talking about constructing a world that can be used by all," said Derksen. "But it won't be on the agenda until we put it on the agenda."

Students left out of federal budget say NDP, CFS

'We are very disappointed, to say the least,' says student representative

by Bryna Hallam

The bad news for students continued Feb. 23 when the federal government released its 2005 budget.

Despite a campaign promise to increase funding for post-secondary education and Minister of Finance Ralph Goodale's announcement that the budget would "deliver on the government's commitments while keeping Canada's books balanced," no such funding was in the budget.

"During the election Paul Martin promised to restore core funding by creating a dedicated transfer payment for post-secondary education of $7 [billion] to $8 billion," said George Soule, national chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). "He broke that promise."

"I don't see how the government can merely pick and choose which major promises they would like to fulfill, let alone major social funding promises such as post-secondary education," said James Kusie, national director of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA). "All of these areas are equally important to our country's well-being. Apparently our government doesn't think so."

Martin's promise came during an election forum in June 2004.

While CASA acknowledges the government for initiatives which they consider "long overdue," such as student loan forgiveness upon death or permanent disability and extended eligibility for Millennium Scholarships for protected persons, the group feels the budget leaves much to be desired.

"I believe more innovation and aggressive funding was in order," said Kusie. "We are very disappointed, to say the least."

UVSS chair Joanna Groves echoed those sentiments. "I was disappointed that there wasn't more for students in the federal budget," she said. "Paul Martin is sending the message that students and young people are not a priority for his government."

NDP MP Alexa McDonough called the budget "a darn shame" and, in the light of Martin's 2004 promise, "a complete betrayal of our post-secondary students."

"There's absolutely no concrete commitment [to education in the budget]," McDonough said, "which is what budgets are supposed to be about—translating words and promises into concrete commitments."

NDP MP Nathan Cullen agreed. "The budget . . . was a real shocker," he said. "This was a fundamental betrayal of certainly the campaign the Liberals ran and also of just about every speech and major policy they have conducted over the last seven months since coming into office."

Cullen characterized the budget as "Conservative-friendly" and accused the Liberal government of "cozying up" to the Conservative opposition.

"I don't know if it's a deal that has been made or what," he said, "but [Conservative party leader] Stephen Harper had a little grin on his face the entire time. And the questions that came from the Conservative bench today had nothing to do with the budget."

However, the Conservative party has been equally critical of the budget.

"While the government says this budget is about delivering on commitments, we are seeing nothing but dithering on commitments," said party leader Stephen Harper.

Harper has acknowledged that the budget is conservative in nature.

"During the last election, the Liberals campaigned against many of the Conservative initiatives that they now accept," he said. "In this budget, the government is following the Conservative party's lead in areas that are important to Canadians, such as tax relief, defence and support for caregivers."

The Conservatives have said they do not want to bring down the government over the budget, and so they are supporting it. If they voted against the budget with the NDP and Bloc Quebecois, it would force an election.

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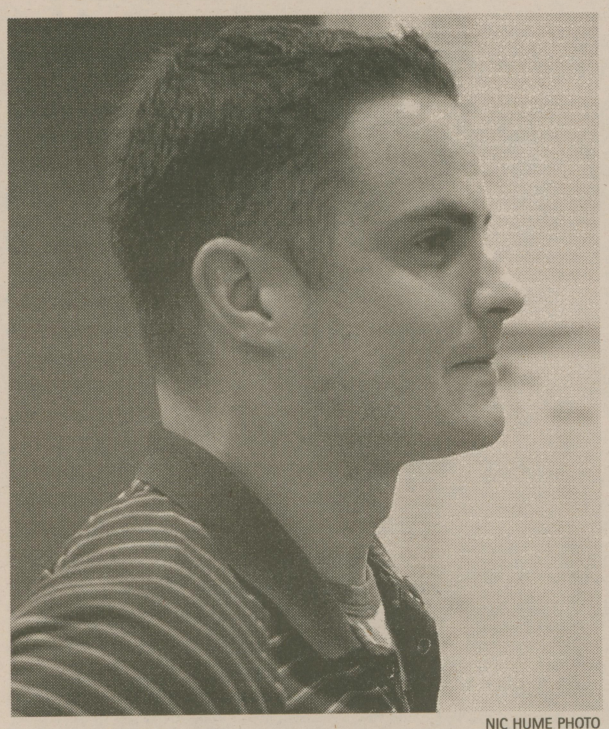
Students worried about CIS, Liberal connection



NIC HUME PHOTO

Dallas Henault ran for chair in 2004.

by Bryna Hallam

For someone who isn't even running in this year's UVSS election, Dallas Henault is getting a lot of attention.

Henault, who last year ran for chair under the Students for Change slate, is currently working for the BC Liberals as a field organizer.

He is also helping to organize the Coalition of Independent Students (CIS) campaign, though CIS chair candidate Agata Lis says his involvement doesn't mean Liberal politics have anything to do with her slate.

The Martlet received a number of tips—some from people associated with the opposing Putting Students First (PSF) slate, some with the CIS, and others unaffiliated—that Henault had been spending time on campus with CIS candidates.

One of the CIS candidates (who wished to remain anonymous) noted that they had seen Henault, along with Neal Evans and Tom Grainger, hanging one of their posters.

"None of them are running," the individual said, questioning why the trio was involved and if there was some sort of "masterminding" going on.

Henault, Evans and Grainger have all been active in the UVic BC Young Liberals. Grainger is currently a UVSS director at large, while Evans ran unsuccessfully as an independent candidate last year.

Lis said that all the attention on Henault is taking the focus away from current candidates and their platforms. She stressed that the slate contains a diverse range of voices and opinions.

"There are opinions ranging from left to right on our slate," she said during a debate Feb. 28. "Everyone has equal voice in the decisions that we make."

Lis also said that the reason for running with other like-minded candidates is that "it is much easier to run as a slate than as an independent. You can pool resources, you can get the word out to more students, and it's just a lot more fun."

"Our platforms are very diverse," Lis said of the slate, dismissing the notion that the CIS is a Liberal stand-in on campus. "What we've been able to do is build a cohesive group of independent students who would have ran independently."

Lis told *the Public Eye*, an online news source, that Henault isn't that involved with the campaign. "Dallas Henault isn't really a student at UVic. So he's not helping us out with the campaign," she said. "I mean obviously he supports us and he used to run with us in the past. So he's with us from time to time—watching the speeches and whatnot. But the campaign is something I'm heading."

An e-mail from Lis to members of the CIS slate leaked to *the Martlet* says that Henault is "in charge of co-ordinating volunteers for postering around campus," as well as for distributing banners and flyers.

The e-mail also directs people to go to Henault with any questions.

Lis dismisses the idea that Henault is behind a Liberal-friendly takeover of the UVSS.

"So he put up a few posters," she said. "I don't see this as pushing any kind of agenda."

UVic lowers entrance grades in bid for more students

by Sean Patrick Sullivan

Anyone with a B average should take a crack at putting in a university application this fall, says UVic's vice-president academic.

The minimum GPA for admission to UVic will be lowered to 75 per cent next year as the university looks to add 500 new student spaces. In previous years, the cut off has been as high as 82 per cent.

"This is creating more opportunities, not lowering standards," said Jamie Cassels. "Dropping the GPA required for entrance by a few points won't affect the quality of our students."

The university is waiting for the province to confirm funding for 500 new student spaces, boosting the size of the incoming class to 3,000 from 2,500.

Cassels said the decision on the exact cut-off percentage is about a month away—they're simply drawing a line in guessing at the right number to bring in 500 new students.

He doesn't foresee any problems with space this fall, despite current complaints about overcrowded classrooms.

"Everyone is feeling a little cramped, and space is a significant issue, but I think with careful timetabling and using our classrooms a little longer each day than we usually do, we can accommodate those new students."

Newly created student spaces will fund the entire infrastructure of the university, including the library, computing labs, human resources and non-academic staff. It also means a wider selection of class times and courses.

"To take 500 new students, that's a heck of a lot of new class sections," said Cassels. "Our main expenditure is to hire new profs, so it's not simply a matter of waitlists getting larger."

The university is also hoping for new government money to use towards facilities. While new professors will be hired, there aren't many empty offices.

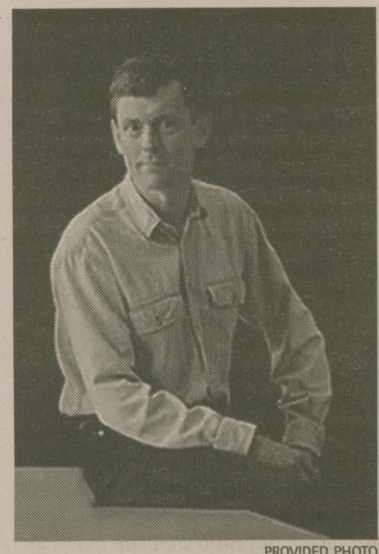
Joanna Groves, chairperson of UVic's students' society, says the move is obviously a good one.

"In the last three years, the GPA requirement has shot up due to lack of space and shut the door to a lot of prospective students," she said.

She guesses that because of the doubling of tuition fees in recent of years, many prospective students opted to go to community college instead of university. There has also been a drop in high school applications.

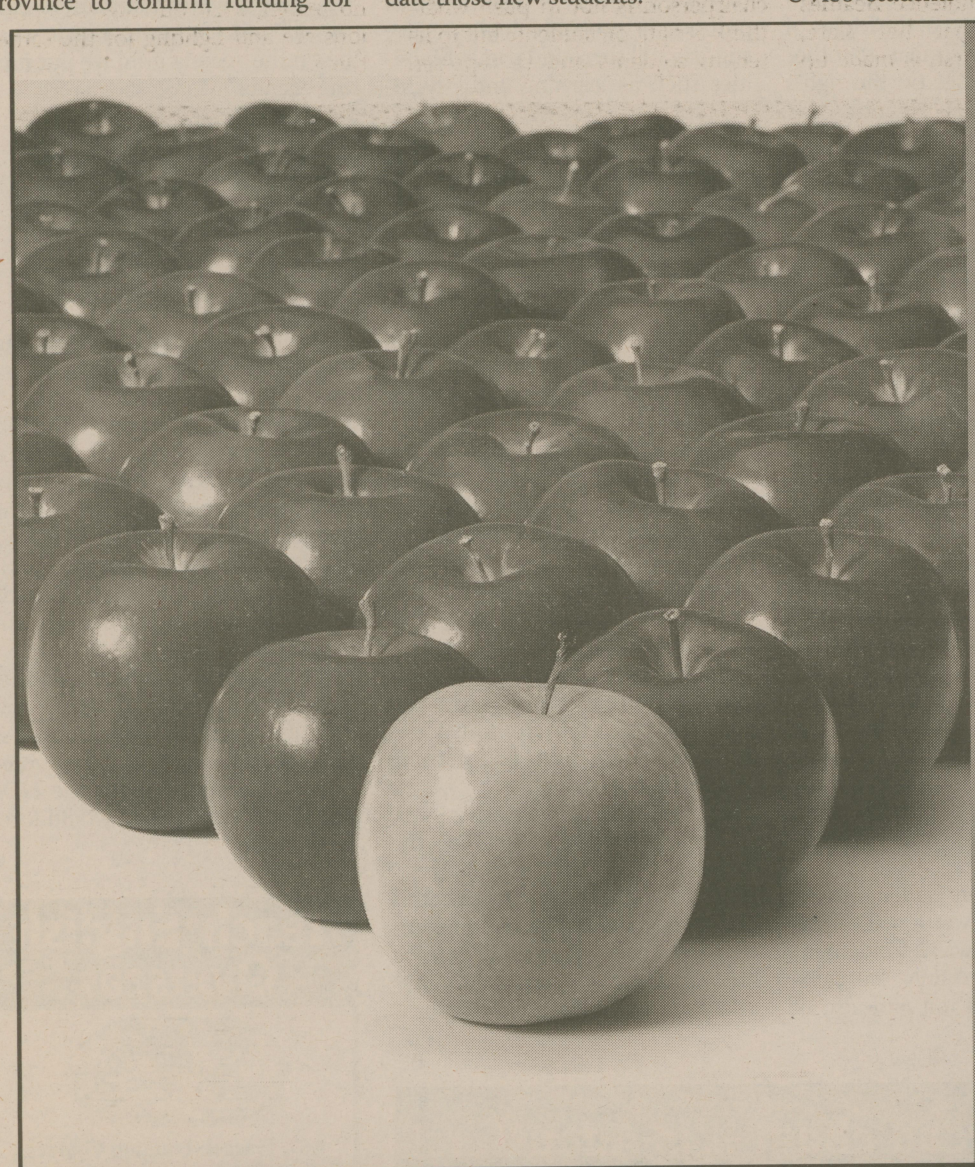
Students subsidize about 30 per cent of their education costs through tuition fees, while the government pays for the rest.

If everything goes to plan, UVic is looking to create another 200 new spaces each year for the next three years.



PROVIDED PHOTO

Jamie Cassels says a relaxed GPA will open the university to more students.



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Chairperson candidates face off in debate

Agata Lis and Penny-Lane Beames trade barbs, compliments just days before the UVSS elections

by David Karp

This week students will elect a new students' society, including a new chairperson. On Feb. 28, *the Martlet* hosted a debate between the two chair candidates.

Fifth-year English student and a current UVic Students' Society (UVSS) director at large Penny-Lane Beames faced off against the outgoing UVSS director of finance Agata Lis. Beames is running with the Putting Students First slate, while Lis represents the Coalition of Independent Students.

The debate, held in the Cinecenta, was open to the public but was only attended by about three dozen people, many of whom were close friends of the candidates.

The most heated part of the debate surrounded Vertigo. Part of the Student Union Building (SUB), Vertigo used to be a nightclub but *was shut down in 2001, in part due to a huge fiscal crisis that resulted in the UVSS losing* approximately $450,000. The UVSS re-opened it this year as a lounge area and an all-ages hangout for students.

Beames pointed out that Vertigo has lost almost $5,000 of student money since it reopened in September 2004. "Considering my opponent's financial records, I would question how much she's actually listening [to students]," said Beames.

"To me it's a concern that my opponent here will not take responsibility for a decision that she made at a board meeting," Lis responded, reminding Beames that the UVSS had voted to run Vertigo at a loss as "a service for students."

Later in the debate Beames revised her position. "We have to think of Vertigo in terms of how it can be used to service students as opposed to turning a profit," she said. However, Beames continued to stand by her criticism of Lis's handling of Vertigo, claiming budget statements showed Vertigo would only post a $600 loss, not a $5,000 loss.

Lis argued that without renovations, Vertigo cannot be profitable, but said that they are out of the question given the UVSS's current debt. Beames disagreed, saying she believes there is enough money.

Lis stressed reducing co-op fees and changing teaching assistant marking policies as issues she felt were important. Beames disagreed, saying the issues were related to academics and out of the hands of the UVSS. She said she would work towards increasing student voter turnout at the May 17 provincial election and increasing communication within the UVSS.

Throughout the debate, Lis stressed her experience as UVSS director of finance. Beames is not concerned about her lack of experience on the executive of the UVSS, claiming to have done up to 30 volunteer hours a week this year for various UVSS and university committees through her position as a UVSS director at large.

Asked about how a Coalition of Independent Students could be able to work together but still be independent, Lis stressed a diversity of opinions within their platforms. "The reason that we ran together is because, frankly, it's much easier to run as a slate than as independents."

In her rebuttal, Beames questioned how diverse Lis's coalition actually is. "As I look at their slate, they tend to be all white, mostly male," Beames said.

AARON MCMILLAN PHOTO

The most heated discussion of the afternoon was over Vertigo, which has lost more than $5,000 of student money this year.

She was quickly corrected by Bhupinder Vinning, a non-white female running with the CIS, who was sitting in the audience. Beames then admitted that her slate, Putting Students First, is made up of almost all Caucasians as well.

When asked about her political affiliation, Lis downplayed her BC Liberal connections. "My goal as a chairperson is not to push what I think is right on students but to listen to students and to represent their needs," Lis said, to which Beames bluntly responded, "I have no political affiliation."

The candidates found common ground on many issues. Both support the UVSS's pro-choice policy, which was recently upheld in a vote at the semi-annual general meeting. Additionally, Lis and Beames both expressed concern about the government's promise of 25,000 new university seats, saying it wouldn't solve problems on its own.

When questioned about UVic's involvement with the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), both candidates agreed it was important to remain members, despite costing each student $7.20 per semester.

Beames pointed out that the day planners provided by the CFS were worth more than seven dollars, while Lis said that the CFS should communicate better with students. Both candidates agreed it was important that the UVSS office remain open and staffed during the day.

Agreement on the importance of environmental issues was also reached. Beames suggested increasing the use of recycled paper on campus, while Lis suggested opening a bike repair shop in the SUB.

As a finale, each candidate was given 90 seconds to make a drawing of how they saw the UVSS.

Lis drew a star with five points, representing diversity, accessibility, services and events, communications and community building. "In the middle it's a happy face because it's a happy student," Lis said.

Beames drew a no-Kraft-Dinner logo, saying "A lot of people are eating a lot of that stuff right now, and nobody likes it for a variety of different reasons, and it's up to all of us that we're not eating mac and cheese, and we're getting together no matter what our diverse opinions are and fighting for the same thing."

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NIC HUME PHOTO

No such thing as a free lunch?

Some days it's pancakes; other days it's soup and sandwiches, but once every two or three weeks, lunch is free.

Members of UVic's Navigator's Club, a Christian-faith based organization, serve lunch at the cost of a conversation. Spirituality is often the topic of discussion, but banter is as diverse is as the people who show up.

The next lunch is on March 17 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in SUB 025.

LAW 101

Set on a lawful education?

A profession in law demands a balance of ideals, hard work and, more often than not, a fight to maintain the norm

by Scott McCall

PROVIDED PHOTO

Troy De Souza says there will be a high demand for lawyers in coming years.

Why do you wish to become a lawyer? This, says Victoria lawyer Troy DeSouza, is the first and most important question people aiming for law school need to ask themselves.

If in it for the money, think again. Lawyers do make good money, he says, and law is a business, but unlike businesses, the people at the top of the ladder do the most work, not the least. If short hours and mega-salaries are what you seek, he says, start a company—and if you need legal skills, hire a lawyer.

Also, if you enter law school believing you can change the world, or if you have high ideals about saving it, you might be better off to rethink your education plan. Being a lawyer is, by and large, a process of maintaining the norm, not bucking it.

However, if you intend to become a lawyer because you think you would be good at it, and feel driven even after resolving the questions about money and ideals, then persevere, says DeSouza, for lawyers will be in demand in the coming years.

According to DeSouza, a gap exists which we potential attorneys may fill. The "baby-boomers" of which current partnerships are composed will soon retire. Their associates will rise into the rank of partner/business owner. And they will need people to take their place as associates and clerks.

In DeSouza's experience, about 50 per cent of law school graduates leave the legal profession within five years. He also claims that the other 50 per cent of graduates often go on to use their credentials, but not their actual legal skills, to obtain employment.

What is the best law school in Canada? The answer, according to DeSouza, is "the school that lets you in." Therefore, apply and apply. Even if you live in a university town, be willing to relocate and accept the first school that accepts you. DeSouza also recommends staying at one school for the entire degree. The bonds that are formed in the first year mature in the second and third, so that by graduation day you will hopefully have made many friends and contacts with whom you can communicate throughout your career.

But this brings us to the question of how to gain entrance at all. DeSouza claims that he was a B student. His LSAT score was low. He was rejected by the law schools at UBC, UVic and Windsor the first year he applied. To prepare for the following year, he took an LSAT prep-course (which he highly recommends) and augmented his GPA by acing a couple of additional high-level undergraduate courses.

Then he applied again. Still, UVic and UBC rejected his application, and Windsor put him on the wait list. Unfortunately, time ran out, and he was forced to apply for a third time. The tactic he used this time was early application. He applied to the same three schools in September. By April he was informed that Windsor had accepted him and UBC had put him on the waitlist.

Some people graduate high school and seven years later find themselves attorneys at law with no life experience. So live a little and avoid the pigeonhole of "professional student." According to DeSouza, the average age of entrants into law school is rising, and the schools report that the more experienced students bring something to discussions that is not available to people who know only school.

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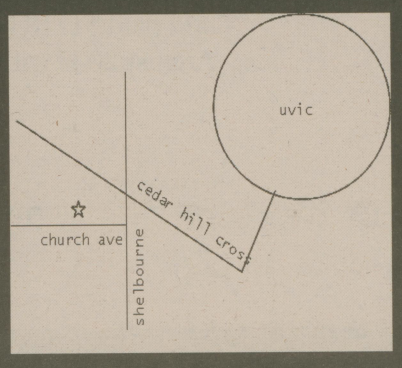

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Bulimia more common than anorexia

Eating Disorer Awareness Week connects diet with body dissatisfaction

by Emma Kendall

On the Health Canada calendar, 25 causes stake out overlapping territory in February. The causes range from Allergy Awareness Week to the International Day for Biological Diversity. Among the issues is disordered eating, a problem which remains continually pertinent for women of the Western world, in particular those of university age.

Statistics speak strongly of the widespread preoccupation with size and appetite. The National Eating Disorders Information Centre (NEDIC) reports that as many as 15 per cent of female Canadian university students are afflicted by the serious condition of bulimia nervosa. Between 80 and 90 per cent of women are dissatisfied with their bodies, with many turning to chronic dieting. A rapid increase in the resulting maladies, notably a 36 per cent increase of anorexia nervosa every five years since the 1950s, shows that the preoccupation is not abating.

Eating Disorder Awareness Week (EDAW) is an annual effort by groups across Canada and the United States, and around the world, to educate the public on the relationship between dieting, body dissatisfaction and eating disorders.

As part of this effort, the UVic Wellness Committee organized a daylong event on March 1. The event featured two panel discussions and a Body Image Art Exhibition.

The art exhibit featured Janet Tran Craig's intricate drawings depicting the depth of feeling that accompanied a 30-year battle with an eating disorder. Craig died in January 2005 at the age of 49 from resulting complications. A biography of her life, along with pictures and journal entries supplied by Craig's sister, spoke of the family's desire to expose the prevalence and severity of the illness.

According to NEDIC, anorexia is not only the deadliest of all mental illness, but it also kills 12 times more adolescent girls than all other causes combined. It is also one of the two most common eating disorders—the other is bulimia nervosa.

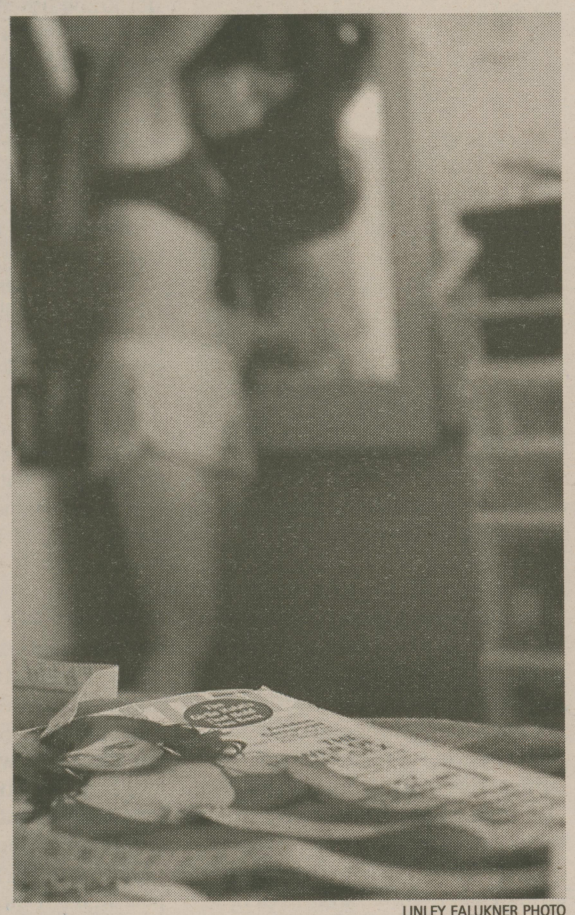
Anorexia nervosa normally develops in the wake of puberty as the individual confronts the struggle of growing up. Often, girls who are prone to anorexia are perfectionists and tend to avoid harm. When faced with a new source of stress, such as peer groups at school, they look for a way to control what they are feeling. Feelings of powerlessness and ineffectiveness lead to anxiety, which manifests as starvation.

Jamie Hurst and Thea Macguire agree. During one of the panel discussions, the pair gave heartfelt accounts of how obsessing about diet destroyed their health, leading to a lot more loss than simply weight. Both women emphasized that the illness, although related to food, is really about the need for control—yet paradoxically they both lost control of their lives.

The cultural pressure behind this anxiety in undeniable. Since the arrival of the emaciated British model Twiggy, who stood five foot seven and weighed 91 pounds, the celebrity culture has advertised thinner figures. Models today weigh a quarter less than the average North American.

Subtle yet pathological cultural pressures have devastating consequences. Plus-size model Kate Dillon looks back on her life as an anorexic runway model and sees the expression in her pictures as weak and hollow. When she began work as a model, she was 50 pounds lighter than she is today.

Constantly told to lose weight, Dillon eventually realized that it was unhealthy to receive compliments praising her appearance because she had not eaten for two weeks. She decided to stop letting outside forces define who she was and looked to "take off the suit" of modelling to see what was inside. She now models for magazines that advocate diverse ideals of beauty.



LINLEY FALUKNER PHOTO

Unrealistic images in media continue to contribute to negative body perception and eating disorders.

The varying roads to self-acceptance are not easy. Dancers, figure skaters and runners, among others, belong to an athletic culture where thinness appears to be an asset during performance. Years of obsessing about food and seeking the highest standard of perfection lead to habitual patterns that are difficult to reverse. In extreme cases, this strain on the body can result in heart failure and death, as in the case of 22-year-old Heidi Guenther of the Boston Ballet.

In the past decades bulimia has far surpassed the frequency of anorexia cases. Unlike anorexia, those grappling with bulimia are not necessarily underweight. Symptoms include episodic overeating, compensatory behaviour such as vomiting or laxatives, and a fear of fatness.

In some instances, these habits can barrel out of control until the number of purges, or vomiting episodes, is above 20 in a day. To make up for the loss, up to 3,600 calories, or two days worth of food, is consumed in a binging episode.

One discussion looked at the challenge of establishing a healthy diet. Unfortunately, many people don't know what it means to eat healthy food, said nutritionist Carol Tickner, suggesting the Canada Food Guide as a good place to start.

Psychology professor Jody Bain pointed out that children, when faced with myriad food choices, will not necessarily choose the healthy food. UVic student Chris Gill shared his story of fast food consumption leading to weight gain and the road back to health through exercise and diet awareness. Answers remain ambiguous as to how to choose healthy foods while avoiding obsession.

What is clear is that whether overindulging or disallowing food, there is a powerful message in appetite. Responding to the message, "You are not okay the way you are, you need to be transformed," we often lose our sense of what is healthy. EDAW helps us regain that sense.

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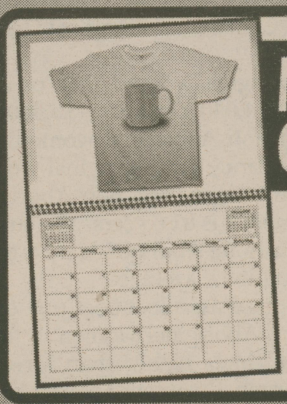
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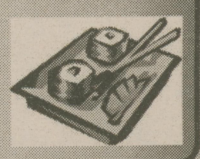

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Canada's forgotten sisters

by Melanie Meloche-Holubowski
The Link (Concordia University)

PROVIDED PHOTOS

Sarah DeVries went mising from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside in 1998. Her DNA was later found on a farm in Surrey.

MONTRÉAL (CUP) — "Just another death, just one more thing you so easily forget," wrote Sarah de Vries in her journal. Sarah is one of the 69 missing women from downtown Vancouver and one of the hundreds of First Nations women forgotten because they are women, are a minority or are prostitutes.

Violence, racism, poverty and marginalization have pushed Aboriginal women into hopelessness. Many have fought through the despair, but some have fallen into an everlasting cycle of drugs, alcohol or prostitution.

Their stories often go untold, their lives portrayed as meaningless. There is a certain humiliation in admitting to the problems within the Native community, according to Amber O'Hara, a woman from the Ojibwa Cherokee Nation who, since being brutally raped in 1990, has been living with AIDS. "Native women do not want to bring more shame to their communities by speaking out about violence."

Demoralizing demograhpics

It is not only racism from others that has pushed Aboriginal women to seek solace on the streets and with drugs. "Aboriginal women are at greater risk for poverty, and a greater number of them are living with survival sex," said Maggie de Vries.

Indeed, poverty, health issues and high unemployment rates often compel Aboriginal women to seek a solution outside their community.

The unemployment rate among Aboriginal people is close to 20 per cent—almost double the national average. Only three per cent have a university diploma, compared to the Canadian average of 14 per cent.

Aboriginal women make on average $14,640 per year—$5,500 less than non-Aboriginal women. Life expectancy for Aboriginal women is 76.6 years. For non-Aboriginal women, it is 81.6 years. The suicide rate among Aboriginals is 2.1 times the national average.

Spousal assaults affect one-quarter of Aboriginal women, a figure three times higher than for non-Aboriginal women. Spousal homicide rates are eight times higher as well.

Aboriginal women are over-represented in the prison system, where they represent nearly 20 per cent of the female prison population. Anik Boileau worked on the Mingan reserve on the north shore of Québec for five years.

She said that Aboriginal women often grow up in violent homes, and this leads to self-destructive behaviour such as drug abuse and entering the sex trade.

Women's stories

Aboriginal women are discriminated against as women and as Aboriginal people—mistreatment that comes not only from others but also sometimes from within their own communities.

Sarah never felt she belonged to any social circle. "I have no people. I have no nation, and I am alone," she wrote.

Sarah was born in 1969 of parents with Aboriginal, black, Mexican and white origins. In 1970, Pat and Jan de Vries, a white family, adopted her.

Her mixed background caused her many sorrows growing up in a white neighbourhood. She was frequently taunted by school children, recalls her adoptive sister, Maggie de Vries. "They should leave them with their own kind," whispered one store clerk as Sarah and her mother walked away.

Yet, Maggie and her family did not know how to deal with the situation. "I don't think we had any real idea of what it was like for her. She was visibly different from us, and no guidance was given to my parents with regard to that difference," she wrote in her book, *Missing Sarah*.

Sarah herself did not know how to deal with the discrimination and the lack of a sense of belonging. "I wish I could tell Mom how unhappy I am, but I myself don't know," she wrote in a letter to Maggie.

Downtown Vancouver offered a diversity that attracted Sarah. It was only there she could bond with people who felt like her—lost and without a true identity.

At the age of 14, she would often run away to downtown Vancouver. She slowly became addicted to drugs and she turned to the sex trade to survive.

Her family tried to bring her home, but Sarah didn't feel she belonged there. "She despised herself for what she was doing, that she judged herself harshly, and that the longer she spent there, the harder it got to come home," wrote Maggie.

On April 14, 1998, Sarah disappeared from the corner of Hastings and Princess, one of the poorest areas in Canada. It was only in August 2002 her family received confirmation that her DNA was found on the Robert Pickton farm.

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) launched the Sisters in Spirit Campaign to tell Sarah's story and many similar ones. The NWAC is questioning the way police have handled information in many Aboriginal women's cases.

"They were resistant to acknowledging the problem. It seemed so obvious but they were reluctant to resource the case," said Maggie.

She said the police took too long to realize there was a pattern of disappearing sex trade workers.

Beverley Jacobs, president of the NWAC, is not surprised by the trend. "Sex trade workers are not seen as people. There's no respect for them."

Historical oppression

Residential schools have created an inter-generational cycle of violence. In the mid-1850s, the government of Canada tried to "Canadianize" Aboriginals by teaching them Christianity and western traditions.

Children were taken away from their families at a young age to be "civilized." Physical, mental, emotional and sexual abuse was common at these schools—approximately three in every 20 children suffered abuse.

In addition, children had very little contact with their families and culture.

The last residential school closed in Saskatchewan in 1996.

The cycle of family violence is hard to break in many isolated communities. Boileau said that many remote communities do not have access to adequate resources.

The question remains of how to ensure Aboriginal women will not end up on the streets, missing or dead.

"It is getting past the shame, being listened to and being believed," said Karey Ann Dear, a sexual assault counsellor at the Montreal Native Women's shelter.

She said the government needs to do more than hand out money to Aboriginal people. "There is something wrong with the system. The offender is the government. They have to say what really happened."

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Women's day about past, present and future

After a slash to funding, Victoria's Status of Women Action Group struggles to remain open

by Heather Bowness

National Women's Day is a look into the future as much as it is a memory of the past and a sign of the current times.

Feb. 28, 1909, marked the first National Women's Day in the United States. Dedicated to celebrating women, the day eventually gained momentum, and in 1977 the United Nations adopted a resolution inviting countries to honour the rights of women. National Women's Day moved to March 8 and is now recognized by over 100 nations.

Cindy L'Hirondelle, former coordinator and current member of the Status of Women Action Group (SWAG) says that International Women's Day is not just about looking back at the accomplishments of women but also about considering the present and future.

"It's a time to highlight what women are facing right now," said L'Hirondelle. "Women face more poverty than any other group because [they] are expected to do so much unpaid extra work, like childcare and housecleaning, along with a full or part-time job."

SWAG is a social advocacy group whose aim is to, "engage, empower and educate women."

The group not only offers individual support for women but also lobbies for long-term social change, such as a universally guaranteed income.

This income would provide women with enough money to live and provide for their children, which, SWAG argues, would keep them from exploitation.

SWAG lost its provincial funding in October and has since struggled to remain open.

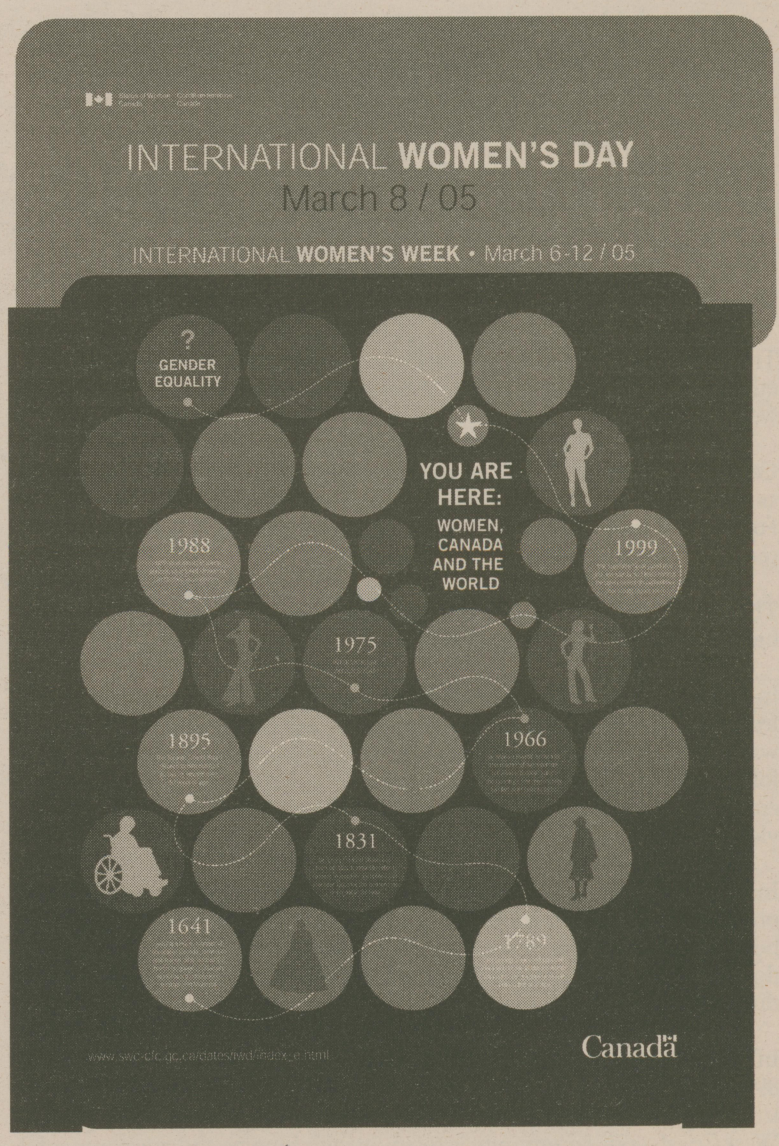
L'Hirondelle said that if women stopped doing unpaid work, the economy would crash. In 2000, women from 64 countries initiated a Global Women's Strike in attempt to bring current struggles to light. This strike continues around the globe, and in Victoria, the Women's Anti-Slavery Committee has declared March 8 a holiday.

While not provincially or federally recognized, the declaration is a step in that direction, says L'Hirondelle. "Things cannot go on as they are.

"The economic system renders women and nature invisible, even though we are the source of all wealth."

On Saturday March 5, SWAG kicks off a fundraiser at Bastion Square beginning at 2 p.m. Later in the evening at 8 p.m., the event will move to The Sunset Room for live music and entertainment. The night will feature performers Kristen Sweetland, Vivienne McMaster with Brix n' Lay, Raja, Crystee Bull, Jenny Cupcake, Glenna, Cami Rush, Sarah Brooks and emcee Rusty Richt. Cost is $4.

For more information, contact SWAG at 383-7322 or e-mail swag@pacificcoast.net.



WOMEN IN HISTORY

Test your knowledge

International Women's Day celebrates the known and unknown women who fought and continue to fight for women's rights. How much do you know about women in history?

1. Who was the first woman prime minister in Canada?
2. Which country first gave women the right to vote?
3. Who was Canada's first female magistrate or judge?
4. When did Caucasian women in Canada get the vote for federal elections?
5. When did First Nations women get the right to vote in Canada?
6. Who was the first female member of Parliament?
7. Who was the first elected female premier in Canada (in the province of B.C.)?
8. What was the name of the group of women who successfully argued that women be considered people under the law?
9. Who was the first female senator?
10. Who was the first black woman cabinet minister?

Answers
1. Kim Campbell 2. Australia and New Zealand 3. Flora MacDonald 4. 1918 5. 1960 6. Agnes MacPhail 7. Rita Johnson 8. The Famous Five 9. Cairine Reay Mackay Wilson 10. Hedy Fry

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Editorial

It's beautiful, but full of garbage

We waste too much.

This week's feature article (see centrespread) illustrates the need for ethical consumption, but only touches on the incredible amount of waste we as a society generate.

Canadians generate 21 million tonnes of garbage annually (that's as heavy as two million elephants!), making us the fifth most wasteful country. Fortunately, there are ways to make a difference through composting, recycling and generally consuming less.

The city of Victoria has an active recycling program, but it still lags behind many other areas in Canada.

In 1998, Nova Scotia banned all organic waste—including food scraps—from landfills. Residents are forced to sort their garbage into three bags of waste, and all trash sent to the landfill is ripped open and sorted through for recyclables. It's illegal to throw out anything that can be recycled or composted, and businesses like grocery stores face stiff fines if they violate the law.

In Montreal, large sidewalk-bins have three clearly marked receptacles: one for waste, another for paper products and another for cans and bottles (much like the new ones in the SUB). They are plentiful in the downtown core, and impossible to miss if you're looking for a place to dispose of an empty bottle.

In Victoria, it's much different. During the trip downtown on the #4 bus, 89 garbage cans are visible, over half of them on Douglas Street. There isn't a single recycling bin outside of the university gates. We're on the West Coast—our community is teeming with hippies and environmental activists, and Victoria prides itself on its tourist-friendly cleanliness. Why is there no accessible recycling in the most high-traffic area of the city?

No one is immune to criticism. Most of us buy products with excess packaging, use individual plastic bags at the grocery store for produce, cover leftovers with plastic wrap instead of reusable containers, and use wrapping paper on holidays.

In many European countries, manufacturers are responsible for the life-cycle of their packaging—they must pay for its disposal, which has led them to cut down on double-packing and glossy, unnecessary packaging. Here, we pay for the cost of excess packaging at the grocery store, and tax dollars are used to sort and dispose of waste.

If you're unhappy with picking up the tab for double-wrapped bread, take action. Boycott products with excess packaging, call the comments phone number on the package to complain, or buy items in bulk. Lobby to make manufacturers responsible for disposing of their mess.

Thankfully, our university is always pushing for change. The UVic Students' Society should be commended for choosing to switch the SUB to 100 per cent post-consumer recycled paper products (where possible), despite the higher cost involved.

The newer outdoor garbage/recycling stations at UVic are more visible, and their construction has dramatically lowered the rate of contaminated recyclables (paper and cans cannot have garbage mixed in, etc). The stations are also more secure from environmental contaminants like birds and rain. Facilities management staff also tries to rescue recyclables when they become contaminated (for example, when some joker throws a half-full cup of coffee in with the aluminum cans), and a fair amount of sorting happens before the trash leaves campus.

The university's progress in composting, prompted by the UVic Sustainability Project, should also be lauded. Since last year, all primary food waste (mostly leftovers in the SUB and cafeterias) has been composted, and the project is being expanded this fall. Sustainability coordinator Sarah Webb and a number of volunteers have been working on the project, which will provide composting bins around campus for food scraps.

The Sustainability Project is still looking for input—a focus group is being held on Wednesday, March 9 in Room B025 of the SUB, from 2:30-3:30 p.m.

The university's new policies are encouraging, but there is still much that needs to be done. Consider the amount of waste you are producing each day—look at what's in your garbage, and ask what could be recycled, what could be composted, and what shouldn't even have been purchased in the first place.

Students need continual education about waste and recycling—society has to insist that it's unacceptable. You can help: Next time you see someone throwing garbage into a recycling bin, or vice-versa, give them a good punch in the back of the neck, and tell them they can do better.

Editorial topics are decided at weekly editorial meetings and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all staff members.

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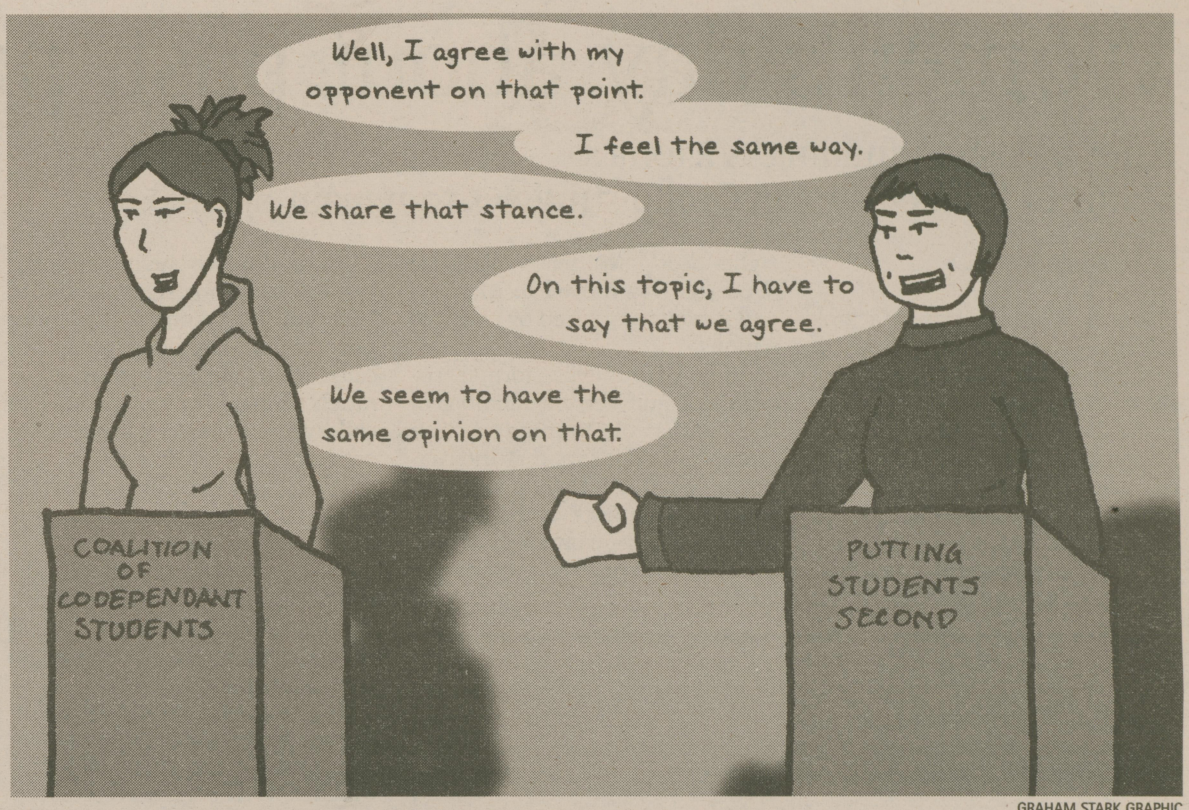
Well, I agree with my opponent on that point.
I feel the same way.
We share that stance.
On this topic, I have to say that we agree.
We seem to have the same opinion on that.
COALITION OF CODEPENDANT STUDENTS
PUTTING STUDENTS SECOND

GRAHAM STARK GRAPHIC

Making a choice is tough when the choice doesn't really matter.

LETTERS

Animal cruelty in Victoria

This morning my friend found her dog beaten and still alive on her deck. He had been tied up with a leash, not belonging to my friend, and beaten over the head with a crow bar until his brains were clearly visible. He was then carried back to my friend's house, laid on her deck, and left to die.

This is a call to anyone who has ever owned and loved a pet, anyone who finds this event terrible beyond words and anyone who would be willing to write an article about animal assault, to please help us spread the word that animal abuse is wrong, disgusting and still prevalent in our small community of Victoria. This event happened in Oak Bay, in the morning, near a well-used park. It is horrifying to think that someone in this quiet and supposedly safe neighbourhood was and is capable of committing such a crime.

Jennifer Bowles

Go universal card system!

As a student often strapped for cash, I support the idea proposed by the Coalition of Independent Students to create a universal card system that would enable me to purchase food or other stuff anywhere on campus without looking for spare coins in my pocket.

I believe it should be the goal of the students' society to push for something that would be convenient for students. I think this has been lacking under past student leadership. Way to go for introducing UVic to the 21st century!

Matthew Lebrun

Choice article correction

In the article "Students Choose Choice" (Feb. 24, *the Martlet*) director at large Erik Haensal notes that the Canadian constitution enshrines a woman's right to control her own body. The Canadian constitution does not actually mention this right, nor does it address the issue of abortion. This right is protected under the Criminal Code which allows "a female person who, being pregnant, permits a qualified medical practitioner to use in an accredited or approved hospital any means for the purpose of carrying out her intention to procure her own miscarriage."

Paul Cortens

Engaging discussion needed on abortion

The reality of the discussion around abortion is that it is very personal for many people and has a long history of division and dichotomy. I agree it is unfortunate that the pro-choice/pro-life debate hasn't always been respectful. However, for Andrew Campbell to state in his letter last week that "hopefully this obnoxious abortion debate can finally die" only perpetuates the fear and ignorance that led to dogmatic and disrespectful arguments.

We need to actively engage in discussion around important issues, so that when decisions must be made, be they personal or political, we are informed and prepared. I hope that members of the UVic community, whatever their stance, are encouraged to look critically and thoughtfully at their own beliefs, the circumstances that structured them and the implications of those beliefs for others. I also hope that we continue to attempt to approach "the other side" with a genuine interest in understanding—not an easy task when such a personal topic enters the public forum. Instead of silencing such an important discussion, why not encourage people to actively engage with others, learning from their different beliefs, experiences and understandings of the world?

Robin Tosczak

Examine your own gender biases

I would like to comment on the immature rebuttal from the writer who is so ungracious about receiving criticism: I am concerned about Melanie Greene's reference to transphobia. Although I let it slide when I first read her article "Surprises at Groovesfest," (Feb. 3, *the Martlet*) I did find her comment urging readers to "beware" about what they might find under a skirt very offensive. To tell readers to "beware" of trans people is outrageous. Ms. Greene's refusal to accept this and her sarcastic retort to criticisms last week are perfect examples of how most people are unprepared to examine their own biases against gender bending, cross-dressing and trans people.

Elana Angus

People lovin' bad music

by Rebecca Peric

Why do people like bad music so much?

Last week I went to a concert. The headliners (who I went to see) were amazing, but one of the opening bands sucked. As the night went on, they only got worse, going downhill, then under the hill, before suntanning in the flames of hell. Yet, still, the crowd cheered and danced along with their music. This is just another example of a talentless band having a huge fan base.

Now, I'm not talking genre here. It's a given that most screamo fans won't be fans of pop and vice versa. There is, however, a difference between distaste of a genre and distaste in the level of talent. Even if someone is a fan of screamo, they could appreciate a good pop band if the band possessed some actual talent.

My point is that bad music does not have to do with what kind of music one likes but with the talent of the band. And the band I saw last week was bad. Their lead singer couldn't sing alone and sounded worse with the back-up vocals.

There is a difference between bands that are lacking ability and bands that are developing, and although every musician is continuously developing, there's always a starting point. New bands, like new musicians, need time to work with each other and learn about each other before their music sounds like it's one of the same. But there's a big gap between a talented band of musicians developing and talentless musicians playing together. The difference is that one will progress to become remarkable, while the latter will always suck.

In a day and age where there are so many mediocre bands, you'd think that the good ones would be cherished. But it almost seems like the opposite is true. Tons of bands that have little to no talent have a huge fan base worshipping the ground they walk on.

Why so do the talentless have such an excess of fans? Well, not everyone has been trained in music or has a perfect pitch, let alone an ear for music. And its not like musicians will ever need a license to play professionally, although that doesn't sound like all that distasteful of an idea to me. So I guess we have to live in a world where the skill-less are often put on a higher pedestal than the skilled.

I suppose there's no harm in people enjoying bad music if it makes them happy. They can go ahead and listen to it. But if I'm stuck at another shitty show, you can find me in the back drinking my distaste away into an oblivious stupor.

MARTLET
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Pick up your own filth

Warning: Mutant pigs are making their way into McKinnon Gym

by Jillian Lang

To pretend that we live in a classless society is a heinous crime.

I'm a student who spends hours upon hours of spare time working as a member of the events staff for the Vikes athletic department. I only work at the games, so the following rant should not be construed as a departmental opinion. However, it does also go for patrons of movie theatres and other public venues where large crowds of people make messes.

Last Friday was my third shift taking tickets at a basketball game, and I decided to stick around late and help the rest of my team with gym cleanup. It was a particularly insane night because of the Pacific West playoffs. The UVic men played UBC and beat them. Good job, boys.

I've always known that people, in general, are pigs, but I didn't realize the extent of it until that night. Imagine more than 2,000 people packed shoulder-to-shoulder in your average gymnasium: men and women, boys and girls, teenagers and students—all of them eating, drinking and having an all-around gay time. Some are drunk, some unshowered, some haven't changed their socks in over a decade. To all of these hearty, happy, fun-filled people, I have this to say: ever heard of a fucking waste receptacle?

For those of you who don't comprehend Canadian English, I'm referring to the garbage can. You may have come across one in your wise years here on this Earth. Hell, you might have one helplessly trapped within the confines of your own home. They come in all different sizes and colours. Some have bags and some don't. Some even have handy-dandy signs indicating their exact use. Also, a short while ago, some ingenious environmental nut invented a concept called recycling (I believe he got paid all of five cents for the patent). You know those blue, rectangular-shaped boxes that the city provides to homes? We're supposed to use them for recycling materials like glass, bottles, cans and cardboard.

I didn't have to get down on all fours to figure out that 21st-century Canadians living in one of the country's most prestigious cities often mistake the floor for a waste receptacle. Either that or they figure the tuition they fork over to the Island's top university guarantees them, at the very least, a personally tailored ass-wiping session at the end of each and every public sporting event. Also, since we, the events staff, earn a whopping $10 an hour to ensure a professional (they make us wear black pants now) yet entertaining evening, we might as well fancy ourselves with the ever-so-latent duty of picking garbage. While we're at it, we can take care of the recycling, too. What the hell, hey?

Thankfully, the UVic men won Saturday's game, sparing me the task of cleaning the gym three days in a row.

To close, I'd like to say a big "fuck you" to those of you who "forget" that you've spent $50 or so on pizza, cookies, hot dogs, pop, chips, candy and popcorn, and then refuse to pick up after yourselves.

The sad story of the blues

Universities should attempt to de-stress student life

by David Crow

A former sessional instructor in psychology at UVic always began his first class by announcing that there would be no final exam. I thought this was wonderful news. But then I realized it was for a not-so-wonderful reason. Depression, especially around exams, is a huge problem at UVic and beyond. Other than university counsellors, he seems to be one of the few people at the university who realizes the extent of this problem and is willing to do something about it.

He understood the significance of student depression so well because, in addition to being an instructor, he also worked at the Psychiatric Division of the Jubilee Hospital. At the end of each semester he was sickened by the number of students who came to the hospital in the middle of a nervous breakdown.

Obviously, this problem is not solely found at UVic. Not by a long shot. According to a University of Michigan study, of the 19 million Americans who suffer from depression each year, a large number of them first exhibit symptoms at college. In fact, college is often labelled "the age of depression." Between ages 18 and 25 is the traditional time for the onset of mental illness, and colleges are packed with students in that age group. Add to this the difficult workload, new social situations and responsibilities and financial burdens of university. It's not a pretty picture.

Typically, a 10,000-student university may expect at least one suicide each year. Suicide, in fact, is the second leading cause of death among college students. UVic has just over 18,000 students, so we should expect at least two suicides this year on our campus.

Things are getting worse, too, as reported by university counselling departments across Canada. In a recent survey, more than 40 per cent of students reported feeling so depressed that it was difficult to function at least once a year. And in university, at least, April is the cruellest month of all. Just look at the example in 2001 when a sophomore at Massachusetts Institute of Technology burned herself to death in her dorm room.

Sure, our university counsellors are well aware of the problem and stand at the ready with therapy and prescriptions on hand, but if they truly want to make any headway against the tide of depression sweeping across campuses, much more needs to be done. For starters, universities should adopt guidelines against different instructors piling all their mid-terms into a single morning, as they so perversely seem to enjoy doing. Wellness courses could be offered to help students to handle the pressures of university life. Perhaps more full-time professors should even follow in the footsteps of that psychology sessional instructor who had seen in his hospital work just how ugly things could look from the other side.

After all, wouldn't it be nice if things were just a little less stressful?

Iraq situation deteriorates

Canadians should be proud they didn't follow Bush to war

by Ingmar Lee

Canadians across the political spectrum are grateful that our previous federal government, for all its shortcomings, had the sense to listen to the majority and stay out of the United States' invasion of Iraq. In spite of great pressure from the corporate media, and the subsequent insult and ridicule of our country from American war-mongers, not participating was clearly the right thing to do.

Few countries chose to participate, and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has described the American assault as being "illegal under international law." The world now watches in abject horror, as do half of all American citizens, as George W. Bush's Iraq attack venture devolves into a morass of destruction, corruption, torture and massacre with no end in sight. Now Canada has rejected American militarism once again by refusing to participate in Bush's Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) plan. Canada has sent an unequivocal message to Bush: "We are not interested in your apocalyptic global domination project."

The American military and its ever-dwindling "coalition" of the coerced are now being surely and systematically defeated in Iraq. An outraged Iraqi resistance is building an ever-increasing guerrilla campaign to rid their country of the invaders. More than 1,400 American soldiers are dead, without counting their coerced collaborators or their hired-gun mercenaries, who are also dying in droves. American-trained Iraqi Security Forces are being slaughtered by the thousands by resistance fighters, who see them as nothing more than traitors. When these forces refused to participate in the mass slaughter and destruction of Fallujah, the Bush administration labelled them as cowards and wimps.

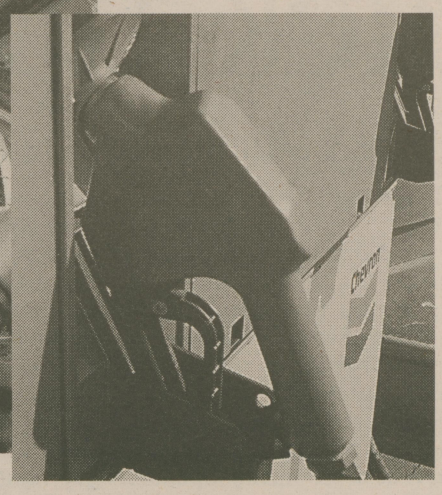
To date, more than 100,000 Iraqi civilians are estimated dead in this latest American assault (Lancet Medical Journal), with scores of innocents maimed, sickened and made homeless. Recently, U.S. Defence Secretary Donald "Rubber-Stamp" Rumsfeld crowed about the awesome power and reach of the U.S. military, while recruitment centres across America struggle to fill the ranks of 150,000 exhausted troops who are now required to complete multiple tours of duty against their will. Desertions are up, while voluntary enlistment plummets. Domestic reserve forces are sent to Iraq and the draft seems imminent. Meanwhile, North Korea openly flaunts its nuclear capability with impunity and Russia sends nuclear fuels to Iran.

Bush's approach to global domination by the overwhelming use of military force is an absolute failure that is bankrupting the country and ruining the reputation of the U.S. worldwide. His policies are greatly endangering American citizens and curtailing their ability to travel freely around the world. What's happening in Iraq is akin to trying to kill mosquitoes with a sledgehammer: you wreck the place, but the wind of the swing simply blows them out of the way. Then they come back and sting you.

In a world where the course of history can be changed with a few 50-cent box-cutters, BMD is also an outrageously stupid, expensive and futile undertaking. In the abundantly unrealistic event that a state launched nuclear missiles at North America, a successful BMD defence would see tons of exploded nuclear material raining down on Canada—the ultimate dirty bomb. To see what the effects of this might be, readers should Google-search "U.S. use of depleted uranium in Iraq."

Contrary to all the bleating in Canada's corporate media, by rejecting Bush's latest BMD arms race, Canada is actually standing with a majority of Americans who are increasingly horrified by what this megalomaniac is doing around the world in their name. If the U.S. and the world are to survive the Bush era, it will be because peace-loving people around the world stood up with a resounding "no" to the global terrorizing menace, George W. Bush.

Got something on your mind?
SHARE IT WITH ALL OF CAMPUS. Write opinions. oped@martlet.ca



What is Ethical Consumpti

The perfect banana

The perfect banana. Unblemished, pest-free, pure yellow. "Export quality." In other words, ridden with pesticides.

When Rebecca gave birth to her child, its lifeless body was yellow. When Michael's mother died after her stomach enlarged, the hospital explained that she had a "complicated disease." In one month, five other people died due to diarrhea and fever. Coconut trees no longer grow fruit. Instead, they have been cut down, and the once-prosperous soil is now infertile.

This is the village of Kamukhaan, a community of 700 almost-extinct inhabitants in the Philippines. In the article, "Kamukhaan: A Village Poisoned," Dr. Romeo Quijano described a plantation worker who lost two toes after "walking through drainage ditches where contaminated water reached his thighs." The worker does this for $1.10 US a day.

For the sake of perfect, unblemished bananas.

❦ ❦ ❦

On Thursday, March 10, The World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is hosting Ethical Consumption Day, in the hope to raise awareness of politely ignored issues such as the story of the Kamukhaan workers.

"We're trying to get people to look deep into ethical consumption," says Noah Ross, a member of WUSC. "Where the product comes from, how they made it, what effects it has on the broader world, and the distances products travel."

Ethical Consumption Day, which will feature a series of lectures, vendors, workshops and roundtable discussions, is meant to bring like-minded people together to raise awareness about the issue of consumption as more than just a binge on commodities.

WHAT EXACTLY DOES IT MEAN TO ETHICALLY CONSUME?

We spend $18 million a year on makeup. It would only take $12 million to give reproductive care to every woman in the world. We could solve the world's literacy problems if we used only two-thirds of the amount of perfume we consume. Theoretically. Society has prioritized the value of consumption above ethics.

"Consumption is the root of a lot of societies. We work to consume," says Johann Jenson, organizer of Ethical Consumption Day. "It is a socially defined behaviour, a form of greed and a measure of status."

While the word "ethical" is defined as "morally correct, having to do with moral principles," the concept of ethical consumption explores not only what we consume, but how and why.

"Ethical consumption is recognizing that you're not just buying a product," says Ross. "You're buying into a global economy, a production process that is riddled with inequality, injustice and environmental degradation."

Jenson says that it's about challenging the notion of consuming. "It's about re-assessing your consumption patterns and consuming less if necessary."

The word "ethical" itself lends to subjectivity. Consuming ethically depends on the priorities and world view of the consumer.

Despite the differing opinions between ethical and unethical choices, there are basic concepts that are the principles of ethical consumption, as displayed by Out of this World, a chain of organic grocers.

Out of this World categorizes ethical consumption into five areas: fair trade, environmental sustainability, animal welfare, community development (which includes the consumption of local goods) and healthy eating (including organic foods).

FAIR TRADE

In 1997, an 18-year-old Costa Rican banana plantation worker died after vomiting up a white substance. It was widely reported in the media, but since it was seven years ago, the minor things have been forgotten—like the fact that Chiquita was the company and that spraying toxic organophosphates was the cause of his internal bleeding and brain damage. Chiquita's claim to the "Better Banana" program, which attempts to address environmental concerns, is suspect due to the once-a-year plantation checkups. And though Chiquita "promotes safety regulations," it has yet to move a children's playground from the spraying vicinity.

Pesticides contaminate the water running off the farms and the boxes used to transport the bananas, and they have been linked to cancer. On the other hand, they kill parasites and preserve fruit over long travelling distances.

Banana plantations are just one example of human rights violations that consumers contribute to, unknowingly, by buying mass-produced commodities from department stores.

Buying fair trade products is an alternative that supports human rights while still meeting the consumer's material needs and wants. It provides small-scale producers and craftsmen with adequate living conditions, including a minimum wage, healthy working conditions and equal employment opportunities. According to Global Exchange, an international fair trade market, it also promotes long-term trading partners, sustainable production techniques, opportunity for aid to producers, and openness to the public. It strictly prohibits forced and child labour.

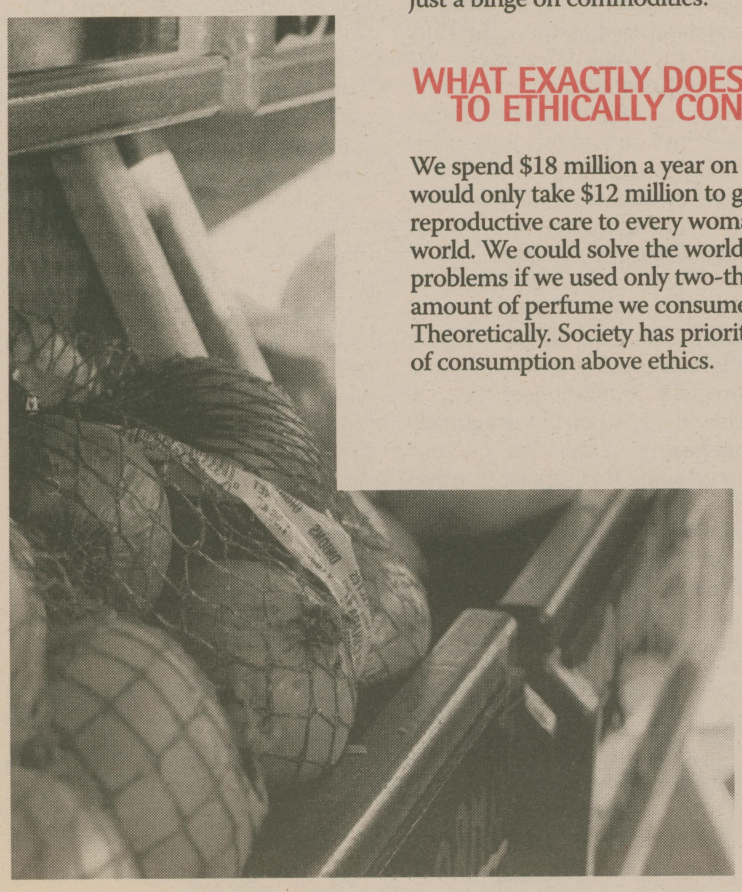
"Fair trade is an alternative to sweatshop production," states the Global Exchange website. "It provides a sustainable model of international trade based on economic justice."

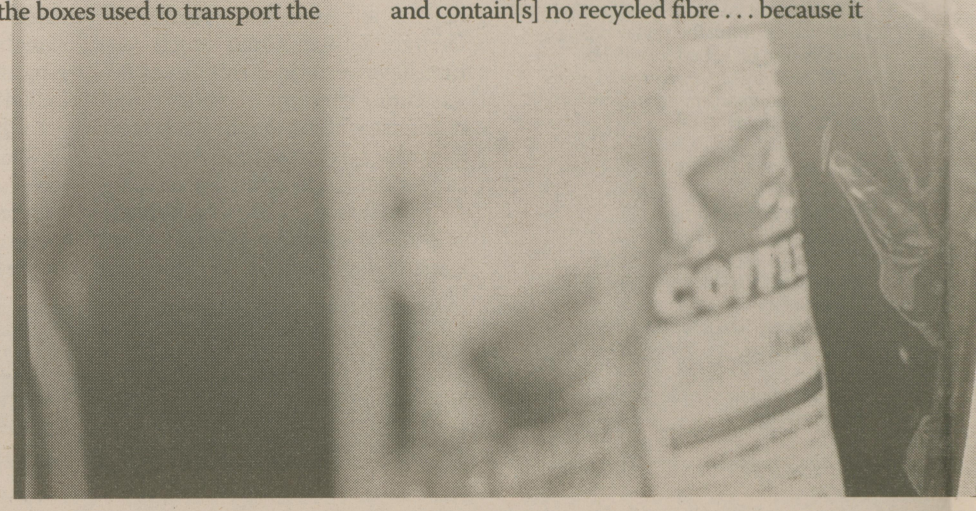
Although it is difficult to ensure that fair trade is, in fact, being practiced, any product exhibiting the Fair Trade Certified label is part of FLO International, a non-governmental system of 17 countries regulated under the Fair Trade Federation.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

One way to measure an individual's consumption patterns and waste output is by the "ecological footprint," which approximates the amount of land it takes to sustain a group of humans. If resources were distributed equitably, the fair footprint would be 1.9 hectares per person. The United States's footprint is five times the size. According to environmental studies academic advisor Dr. Duncan Taylor, we would need the resources of three other planets to sustain our growth at the rate we are consuming and wasting.

Producers are often more concerned with comfort for the consumer than with their product's toll on the environment. Kleenex Facial Tissues, for example, advertises on its website that it uses "100 per cent virgin fibre and contain[s] no recycled fibre . . . because it





Ethical Consumption Day schedule

PANEL DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. *Corporate Responsibility (MPR)*
Lynn Thorton – VIDEA
Donna Morton – Environmental Entrepreneur
Stephen Whipp – Financial Planner

1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. *BC Forestry Politics (MPR)*
Dr. Jeremy Wilson – Prof. of Political Science (UVic)
Ken Wu – Western Wilderness Committee
Lisa Matthaus – Sierra Club of BC
Valerie Langer – Activist
Ken James – Youbou Timberless Society

2:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m. *Beyond Consumption (MPR)*
Dr. Warren Magnusson – Prof. of Political Science (UVic)
Maureen Wild – Educator & Sister of Charity
Dr. Briony Penn – Journalist & Prof. of Env. Studies (UVic)
Dr. Jeff Corntassel – Prof of Indigenous Governance

PRESENTATION/WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

11:30 a.m. *Rights & Consumption (SUB B024)*
Amnesty International (UVic Chapter)

11:30 a.m. *FILM Being Caribou (TBA)*
Documentary by Leanne Allison & Karsten Heuer

11:30 a.m. *Global Food Security (SUB B025)*
Lifecycles

1:00 p.m. *Fair Trade Coffee Workshop (SUB B025)*
Stacey Toews

2:30 p.m. *Sweatshops & Solidarity* (SUB B025)
Co-Development Canada

tion?

story and photos by Ashley Akins

provides the superior softness consumers expect." Our 180-year-old trees from the Canadian boreal forest are being cut down to create nose-friendly tissues. In the article, "Kimberly Clark: wiping away our ancient forests," Greenpeace explains that clear-cutting the boreal forest, such as this, creates barren, unsustainable woods, endangering most of our keystone national animals such as the black bear, the bald eagle and the wolf.

There are corporations and individuals who positively counteract companies like Kleenex, but comparatively, they do not balance out the ecological footprint. For example, Aveda, a cosmetic company, incorporates the role of "environmental leadership and responsibility" into its identity. And there are individuals like UVic professor Briony Penn, whose office is filled with nothing but three cans of tuna (which were canned by a friend from Saltspring Island), a tub of organic peanut butter and a couple of books. She works with the lights off and the windows open. Her desk is bare other than her computer, which she is embarrassed to own.

OTHER ISSUES

Community development is a key issue pertaining to ethical consumption and promotes the idea of consuming locally produced goods. Eric Higgs, like Penn, is a UVic environmental studies professor who strongly encourages localizing commodities. When he arrived at this university a year ago, his office had no desk. Instead of allowing the school to order him a new, mass-produced desk, he found a local woodworker who hand-crafted one out of sustainable wood, at the same price as Ikea.

Nutrition and the consumption of locally produced goods are two components of ethical consumption that personally relate to consumers and are often much easier to grasp. One of the most pressing issues is organic foods, bringing into account the fifth cornerstone of ethical consumption: animal welfare, which prohibits crowded living conditions and non-organic feed. Under the British Columbia Standards, it is mandatory that all livestock and poultry are given access to fresh water, exercise and free range.

Organic choices include the humane treatment of animals, natural foods without genetically modified organisms or pesticides (which provide health benefits), and protection of the environment through organic agriculture. Like fair trade goods, several manufacturing methods are prohibited in organic production. The BC Standards of Organic food certification prohibit GMOs, irradiation, monoculture, raw manure on products used for human consumption, and the use of synthetic materials such as herbicides, pesticides, hormones and antibiotics.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Ethical consumption is a gradually growing trend both in North America and Europe. As the media continues to express interest in it, consumers are beginning to reassess their values. Still, there is a fear that this trend is simply another new "fad" rather than a developed, alternative lifestyle.

"People are now looking towards traditional values as they realize that environmental degradation and human rights abuses don't fit in with their values," says Jenson.

But this market of "Birkenstock-wearing hippies," as Jenson puts it, are not the consumers to be concerned about. "How do you attract the interest of more than just the niche market?" he asks.

One of the major conflicts concerned with spreading awareness about ethical consumption is the distance between the product and consumer. Often, because the principles implied in consuming ethically do not affect the consumer personally, the issue does not hit close to home.

"People identify with what they know," says Jenson. "When you're distanced from something, it's not really real." He suggests that people assume the government has taken care of it.

Another major barrier surrounding the promotion of ethical consumption is the ignorance of the product, demand, consumption system as a whole. Awareness of larger structures shaping society's consumption patterns will push people to question their own. It's no longer enough to rely on the three R's (reduce, reuse and recycle).

"I don't think that me alone will change anything," admits Jenson. "But eventually ideas circulate, constructing opposition to the current situation. It will change the idea of how a society is supposed to consume."

THE DAY: MARCH 10

Ethical Consumption Day, with events located in the Michele Pujol room in the SUB from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. next Thursday, is an opportunity to openly address these issues. Three panels of roundtable discussions will feature the issues of Corporate Responsibility, BC Forestry Politics, and a Beyond Consumption panel that deals extensively with the theoretical and sociological issues surrounding consumption. One of the goals for the day is to get people questioning their high-consumption lifestyles, to consider alternatives and to acknowledge the possibility of consuming less.

"There's an abundance of social organizations in Victoria that share fundamentally similar ideals about what we want in society," says Jenson. "The idea of Ethical Consumption Day is to bring these people together and allow them to articulate what that society ought to look like."

Penn, who is featured as a panelist in the discussions, thinks that Ethical Consumption Day is exactly what the public needs.

"Anything that gets people optimistic is beneficial," she says. "We need to be cheered up."

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According to Ross, the goal of ethical consumption is not to make all consumption ethical but, instead, to "have it as a part of our everyday lives, just as unethical consumption is."

By acknowledging that our ecological footprints are creating irreversible environmental consequences, while our consumption patterns support human rights violations, we are one step closer to making ethical consumption more than just a Birkenstock fetish.

"A few people die, and suddenly there's awareness and massive change," says Jenson bitterly. "It may take an environmental disaster before they care and stop driving their SUVs."

Product	Annual Expenditure	Social or Economic Goal	Additional Annual Investment Needed
Makeup	$18 billion	*Reproductive health care for all women*	*$12 billion*
Pet food in Europe and United States	$17 billion	*Elimination of hunger and malnutrition*	*$19 billion*
Perfumes	$15 billion	*Universal literacy*	*$5 billion*
Ocean cruises	$14 billion	*Clean drinking water for all*	*$10 billion*
Ice cream in Europe	$11 billion	*Immunizing every child*	*$1.3 billion*

Adapted from: The Worldwatch Institute *State of the World 200*

Plympton's latest film fun but flawed

MOVIE REVIEW | HAIR HIGH

by Lena Ross

Since the days of my youth spent in front of a television blaring reruns of *Inspector Gadget*, I've become a diehard animation addict. And my enthusiasm runs deep. When I discovered the unique brilliance of Bill Plympton's independent animation six years ago at *Spike and Mike's Sick and Twisted Animation Festival*, I was hooked.

In addition to many short films, Plympton has also created a couple of feature-length films, including *I Married a Strange Person* (my personal favourite) and *The Tune*, which was nominated for an award at the Sundance Film Festival and has the distinction of being the first full-length animated feature hand-drawn by one person. In Plympton's trademark eccentric style, his latest film—*Hair High*—relies on spoofing the irksome quality of stereotypes to drive a plot that twists and turns from banal cliché to twisted comedy.

The story takes place at Echo Lake High, a place all too familiar with its romantic '50s high school setting. But in Plympton's surreal universe, the students' hair reaches aggrandized heights, with the biggest hair belonging to Echo Lake's most prestigious couple—Rod the quarterback and Cherri the head cheerleader.

On the first day of school, Spud, the brainy new kid, taps his tiny scooter into Rod's massive muscle car, causing a tiny flake of paint to come fluttering to the ground. He then embarrasses Cherri in front of (gasp!) an entire classroom and is sentenced by Rod to be her "slave," carrying her books home for her and helping her cheat in biology. Not taking any turns to the unexpected, Spud and Cherri eventually fall in love with flowers blooming up around them when they first kiss. Spud then asks Cherri to the prom and she accepts.

On the way there, as flowers bloom in the wake of their car, they are chased off the road by a jealous Rod and end up at the bottom of Echo Lake. A year later, the lovers return from the depths, skeletal and decomposing, with beautiful, streaming hair billowing among the reeds as they start up the car and drive out of the lake to reclaim their rightful titles of prom king and queen.

Though the plot is dishearteningly unoriginal when compared to his earlier work, Plympton throws in enough grotesque and eccentric twists to warrant our attention. For example, to the tune of lighthearted music, the smoking biology teacher coughs up his internal organs and the kids have to use their knowledge of biology to get them back in.

This scene is an example of the animator at his best. His recurring motif of the disintegration and deconstruction of the human body parodies the seriousness with which we all take ourselves and the ways in which we primp, sexualize and stereotype ourselves.

Overall, *Hair High* does not live up to the heights of Plympton's other work. His plot for *I Married a Strange Person* was far superior in its imaginative quality. Though *Hair High* is a humorous and entertaining piece of adult animation, it fails to say much about anything save the hackneyed declaration that love conquers all. The story for *Hair High*, having taken over three years to complete, has emerged as tired as Plympton himself must be.

PROVIDED PHOTO

Rod and a skeletal Spud swap fluids, and organs, at the prom.

Give yourself aural pleasure

Norman Nawrocki
Duckwork
Les Pages Noire

by David Karp

Bold. That's the best way to describe Norman Nawrocki's debut album, *Duckwork*.

The CD takes a hard-hitting stance against America's foreign policy, and Nawrocki uses all sorts of media, but his message is constant throughout—America is the bully.

Nawrocki, a B.C. boy who's spent the last two decades in Montreal, has held various jobs as an actor, journalist, community organizer, sex educator, university professor and musician. He has performed his sex show at UVic.

Listeners to *Duckwork* will find great variety—English and French, spoken word, pop, techno, Celtic and soft jazz. Nawrocki is very clear with his message though, so patriotic Americans beware—the CD is filled with socialist, blatantly anti-American rhetoric.

Duckwork features two particularly effective tracks. "By What Right, America?" is a pop song that has a young schoolgirl list off all the American invasions in the last 100 years. What's so amazing? It's six-and-a-half minutes long.

"CNN News" is a piece that features actual phone messages played over top of a pulsing cymbal and eerie violin. They were left on Nawrocki's answering machine by his paranoid father, who became distressed after watching a news report on CNN. In his father's heavy Polish accent, Nawrocki is warned to stay out of major Montreal intersections because there may be suicide bombers.

While the music itself is not overly creative or enticing, Nawrocki certainly packs a punch with his lyrics. *Duckwork* is an intriguing artistic take on our troubled southern neighbour.

Bright Eyes
I'm Wide Awake, It's Morning
Saddle Creek

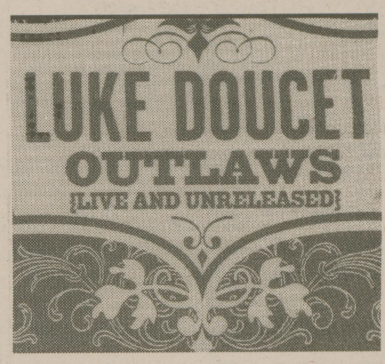
by Sarah Ivens

With so much modern music leaning towards commercialism, the appeal of Bright Eyes and their latest album, *I'm Wide Awake, It's Morning*, should come as no surprise. With its release came hope for more lyrics that are a little too honest to take in easily, and it didn't disappoint.

Penning intensely personal lyrics that are paradoxically also universal ("I got no plans and too much time/ I feel too restless to unwind"), Conor Oberst, the only constant member of Bright Eyes, as well as the 14 other artists who joined him on this album, has done the tradition proud. They've produced a collection of songs that, while they shine, still retain a rough and raw quality.

The record still has the angst-ridden energy that Bright Eyes is known for, but several of the tracks have a folky, upbeat vibe not heard on previous albums. The band released *I'm Wide Awake* simultaneously with another album, *Digital Ash in a Digital Urn*, which plays the contrasting role: it has less acoustic emphasis and more focus on the band.

I'm Wide Awake, It's Morning retains the things that Bright Eyes is loved for, and at the same time introduces a new direction for the music to move in. It's a thrilling album from a spectacular band.



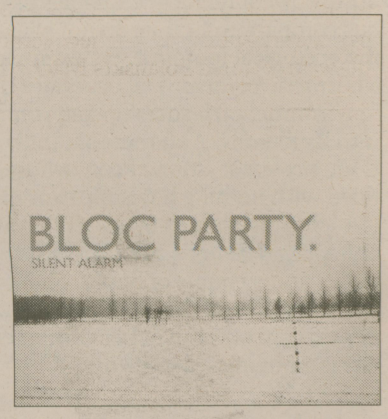
Luke Doucet
Outlaws: Live & Unreleased
Six Shooter

by Adam Jones

If you've ever been down to the Hootenanny at Logan's on Sunday afternoon, you might be familiar with the music of Luke Doucet without even knowing it. He burst out in 2001 with an incredible first solo record, *Aloha, Manitoba*, and has been lying low ever since, touring with a variety of live acts and keeping his hand in other projects. These projects include producing labelmate NQ Arbuckle's low-key country masterpiece *Hanging the Battle-Scarred Pinata*, the Canadian sleeper record of 2002.

This release stays true to the Doucet sound of restrained country guitar, half-sung half-whispered vocals and intimate lyrics. From more upbeat, vaguely surf-influenced swingy numbers like "Emily, Please" to whiskey-drenched paeans to heartbreak like "At the End of the Day," *Outlaws* comes across like a solid release, not a mere miscellany of collected tracks.

Doucet lays down a nice cover of Tom Waits' "Gun Street Girl" that by no means pales in comparison to the classic original version. (Imagine Waits covered by the Sadies.) When Doucet comes out with his next full-length album, it's sure to be a treat. But for now we can enjoy another nugget in the "no depression" alt-country movement, with its "outlaws, pirates, deviants and scoundrels."



Bloc Party
Silent Alarm
Atlantic

by Adam Nelson Humphreys

Due for North American release this Monday, the debut from London's Bloc Party is a superbly crafted piece of post-punk/garage rock. As their web site attests, "Bloc Party is an autonomous unit of un-extraordinary kids reared on pop culture between the years of 1976 and the present day."

They combine superb drumming (seriously how did they make the drums sound so sharp?), a duo of interplaying guitars and a vocalist whose clarity and range are admirable even if he is just yelling. The result is an excellent and unpretentious guitar rock album that is easily in the same league as the 2004 releases of their U.K. counterparts, Franz Ferdinand and the Futureheads.

It will only be a matter of time before "Banquet" becomes this year's "Take Me Out." The track is as emotional as post-punk can get and as dance-floor friendly as anything with guitars.

From the moment the drums give way to a guttural "ahhhh-wooo" until the end of the track, you'll be hooked.

It's stuck on repeat in my portable music playing device.

You should really hit up BitTorrent for this one if you've bothered to read this far into the review. If you're one of those law-abiding folks, the CD hits record store shelves on Monday. But who knows if they even need the royalties?

Bloc Party are third on the charts in the UK as I write this.

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Hard times and bad weather

Phoenix production of *Fen* blends humour and tragedy to great effect

What: *Fen*
When: Until March 5
Where: Phoenix Theatre, UVic
How much: $10 for students, more for slackers

by Tom Birch

The Phoenix kicks off this year's Festival of Innovative and New Drama with Caryl Churchill's *Fen*, a warm and sympathetic look at hard times and bad weather in 1980s England. Though the landscape is flat and dull, Churchill's characters are not and here we meet giggling farm children, singing Baptists, a frustrated poet, a ghost and perhaps most memorably of all, a dungarees clad farmer who dashes across the stage on stilts shouting "I won't turn back!" at the sun. Clearly, satisfaction is guaranteed for all.

The Martlet caught up with first time director Yasmine Kandil before Thursday's opening night to see how the last minute preparations were going.

"It's absolutely nerve wracking!" she laughs. "You wake up thinking of it and go to sleep thinking of it. You just have to leave it alone and trust the actors now." Kandil has no reason to worry, however, as it all goes without a hitch.

The play opens with swirling winds, a gloomy mist and some oddly medieval sounding harmonies (with accompanying beat-box) from the six-piece cast. The eerie atmosphere is pitched somewhere between Roman Polanski's Macbeth and a particularly haunting episode of Scooby Doo, and brilliantly conjures up the haunted, windswept Fens.

Frank (David Ward in good form throughout) is a labourer afraid of "goin' mad, heights and beauty." He is in love with Val, a highly strung mother of two (Claire Charland) who longs to leave her husband and run to London with Frank, but cannot bear to leave her children. Their affair is not a happy one, and as such, the lover's piano theme is only marginally more upbeat than Chopin's "Funeral March." Somehow, Frank and Val manage to dance to it.

Aynsley Carson and Kate Richard are both charming and entirely convincing as bushy-haired farm children Shona and Deb, who aspire to be either housewives, hairdressers or Eskimos when they grow up. It is Kathleen McGuinness, however, who steals the show with her giddy telling of a gory bedtime story and the aforementioned appearance on stilts. As Nell, she can effortlessly change the mood of a scene from good natured slapstick one moment to a tense hush in the next, and the stage is always richer for her presence.

The whole cast manages to keep up convincing East Anglian accents throughout the play, which makes an already engaging script really come alive. Worthy of a special mention is Anne-Marie de la Giroday who, as Val's 90-year-old grandmother, was able to keep a straight face while casually delivering the extraordinary line: "There were five of us, if you count me brother John that had his face bit off by the horse."

The play is fast paced and often disorienting. According to Kandil, "We've blended the scenes so that characters from the scene before comment on or even notice the next characters and what they're doing. They're not separate entities." This practice of having scenes tumble into each other unannounced can be confusing but works well to evoke the farm's stifling lack of personal space. Hurried on-stage costume changes also create the impression of a close-knit community, and despite the small cast, the stage always seems crowded and busy.

Kandil began her career doing drama workshops with underprivileged children on the streets of her native Cairo and has been able to use her experience in making Fen. "They were always laughing and making jokes, regardless of how hard times were. They took life simply for what it was and tried to make the best of it.

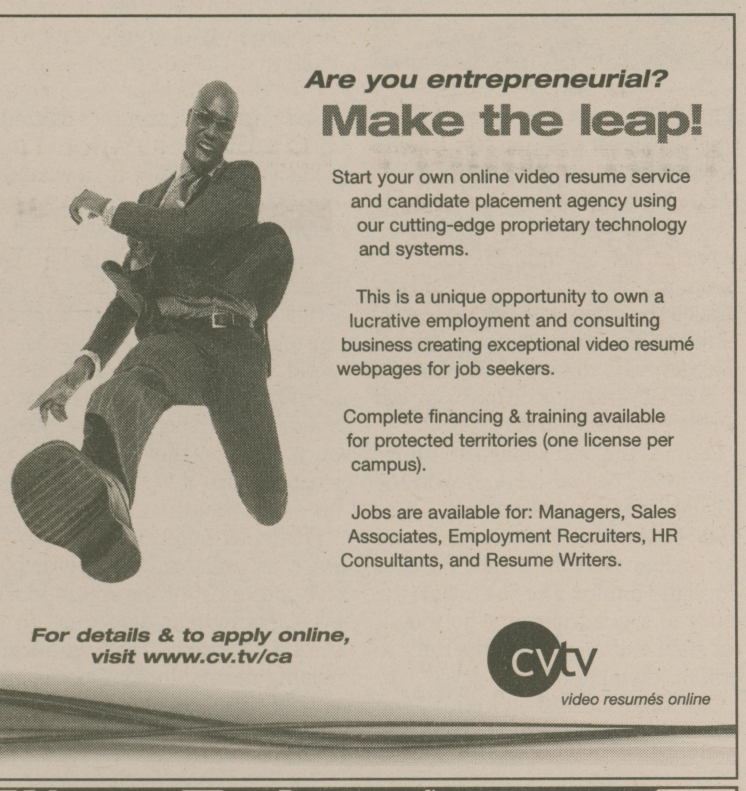
"People involved in any sort of theatre enjoy the process of drawing emotions from themselves and letting that emotion be as true as they can possibly make it. It's a wonderful process," she adds. "I love it."

Beneath the surface, all of Churchill's characters are walking around on stilts and doing anything they can to rise above the crushing poverty that surrounds them. Fen is funny, emotionally engaging and well worth a look.

Tickets can be purchased until March 5 by calling (250) 721-8000 or by visiting the Phoenix Box Office on Ring Road.

PROVIDED PHOTO

Claire Charland and David Ward as troubled lovers in *Fen*.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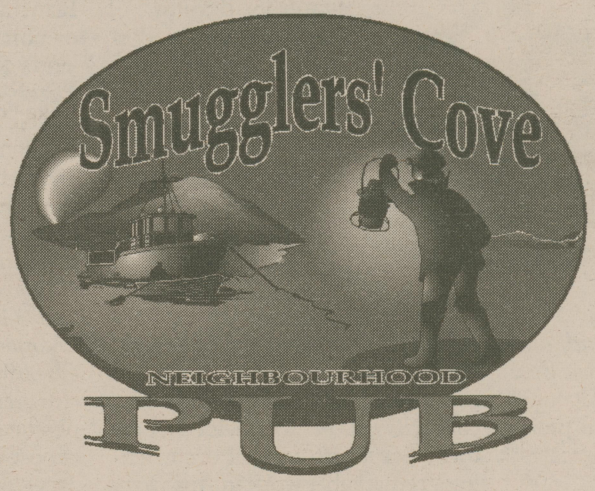

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The Oscars in a lustrous gold nutshell

by Sacha Narine

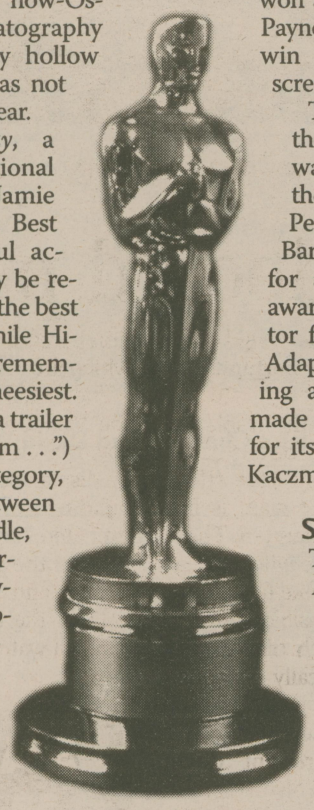
The Big Ones

And so it has come to pass. *Million Dollar Baby* snagged many of the big awards at Sunday's Oscar ceremony, including Best Supporting Actor for Morgan Freeman, Best Actress for Hilary Swank, Best Director for the surprisingly inarticulate Clint Eastwood and Best Picture. It's hard to imagine a film more different than last year's winner, Peter Jackson's *Return of the King*.

Although Martin Scorsese's *The Aviator* received the most nominations (11—the same as *Titanic* and *Return of the King*), even the none-too-bright members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) could see past Leo DiCaprio's boyish good looks and Robert Richardson's now-Oscar-winning cinematography to the film's mostly hollow core. *The Aviator* was not the best film of the year.

Neither was *Ray*, a strong yet conventional biopic that won Jamie Foxx the award for Best Actor. Foxx's tearful acceptance speech may be remembered as one of the best in Oscar history, while Hilary Swank's will be remembered as one of the cheesiest. ("I'm just a girl from a trailer park who had a dream . . .") In the Best Actor category, the real race was between Foxx and Don Cheadle, whose superlative performance in the moving-yet-awkward *Hotel Rwanda* truly deserves recognition. As does Clint Eastwood's performance in *Million Dollar Baby*—if you look at Eastwood and think *Dirty Harry* or *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, his role in the latest Best Picture as a stern, curmudgeonly boxing trainer will have you praising him as one of America's greatest actors.

Sideways was also nominated for Best Picture, but, as film critic Jim Emerson points out, you can replace the word "best" with the word "most" to get a better understanding of how AMPAS picks the winners. They're not necessarily looking for the Best Acting, but rather the Most Acting. Paul Giamatti's turn as Miles, a failed novelist and wine aficionado who nervously woos Maya, played by Virginia Madsen (a nominee for Best Supporting Actress), was too subtle for the Academy to even offer Giamatti a nomination. His co-star Thomas Haden Church was up for Best Supporting Actor, likely because of an intense crying scene—the "most" acted scene in *Sideways*.



Neither Madsen nor Church won awards, but Alexander Payne and Jim Taylor did win for their adapted screenplay.

The true underdog in the Best Picture category was *Finding Neverland*, the magical biography of Peter Pan author J.M. Barrie. The film was up for an astonishing seven awards, including Best Actor for Johnny Depp, Best Adapted Screenplay, Editing and Art Direction. It made off with a single award for its original score by Jan Kaczmarek.

> "Foxx's tearful acceptance speech may be remembered as one of the best in Oscar history, while Hilary Swank's will be remembered as one of the cheesiest."

Swank vs. Bening

The votes in the Best Actress category were probably divided between Annette Bening for her role in the critical and commercial flop *Being Julia* and Hilary Swank in *Million Dollar Baby*. In 2000, Bening was up for Best Actress for her portrayal of a materialistic, over-ambitious realtor in *American Beauty*. But an indie film called *Boys Don't Cry* yielded a performance so strong that even Bening's remarkable work in *American Beauty* was outshone. The actress who won for *Boys Don't Cry* was none other than Hilary Swank, playing a transsexual struggling to survive in small-town Texas. Again this year, the much-younger Swank took the statue for acting a role perfectly suited to her acting style and unique look.

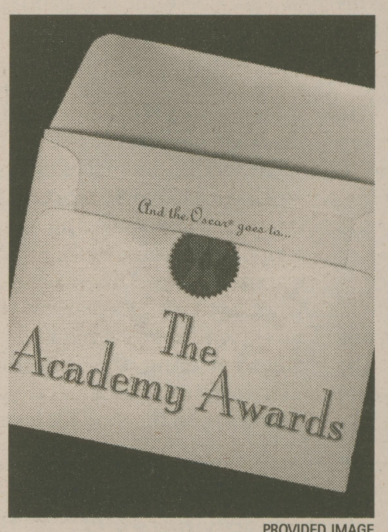
As Best Actor nominee, Jamie Foxx was also a contender in the Best Supporting Actor category for his role as a kind-hearted cabbie in the stunning Michael Mann thriller *Collateral*. He went up against veteran actor Morgan Freeman, who, for his work in *Million Dollar Baby* and many other films, deservedly won the award. The other nominees were Alan Alda for his portrayal of a corrupt senator in Scorsese's *The Aviator*, Thomas Haden Church in *Sideways* and Clive Owen as an aggressive and imposing "caveman" dermatologist in one of the very best films of last year, *Closer*. Owen's performance is truly remarkable as part of a perfect-fit ensemble comprising Julia Roberts, Jude Law and Natalie Portman.

Portman was nominated for her role in *Closer* in the Best Supporting Actress category, alongside Cate Blanchett for her portrayal of Katherine Hepburn in *The Aviator*, Laura Linney for *Kinsey*, Virginia Madsen for her idealized character in *Sideways*, and Sophie Okonedo for her role in Terry George's haunting *Hotel Rwanda*. Ultimately, Blanchett took the award after a prior nomination for her role as England's Renaissance queen in 1999's *Elizabeth*. Many critics predicted an underdog win for Madsen, but the Academy walked the beaten path by giving the award to Blanchett, who should have won for *Elizabeth*. Portman's performance in *Closer* is inspiring as her first role as an adult after evading maturity in *Star Wars* and *Garden State*, and Sophie Okonedo complemented Don Cheadle perfectly—together the two made *Hotel Rwanda* a deeply personal drama and not solely an exposé of the Rwandan massacre.

Pleasant Surprises

After missing the award four times, Martin Scorsese seemed the easy choice for a Best Director Oscar. But the award went to Clint Eastwood, and rightly so—*The Aviator* is one of Scorsese's least interesting films, worlds apart from masterworks like *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull* and *Goodfellas*. The other nominees were Taylor Hackford for *Ray*, Mike Leigh for his story of a post-WW2 abortionist—*Vera Drake*—and Alexander Payne for *Sideways*. Payne, Hackford and Leigh had no real chance to win the award, and even Eastwood's win came as something of a surprise, albeit a welcome one.

One of the night's happiest moments was Charlie Kaufman's win for Best Original Screenplay for the postmodern love story *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. Kaufman, a recluse and social misfit, braved the stage to thank the Academy and his friend director Michel Gondry, who directed both *Eternal Sunshine* and Kaufman's earlier script, *Human Nature*.



PROVIDED IMAGE

The Oscar envelope is notoriously diffcult to open. Or maybe actors just suck at opening letters.

Perhaps the best superhero movie ever made, *Spider-Man 2*, won the Visual Effects award, and *Open Your Eyes* writer/director Alejandro Amenábar won the award for Best Foreign Film for *The Sea Inside*, the story of a quadriplegic who fought for legal euthanasia and the right to end his own life.

Canadian Chris Landreth's *Ryan* won the award for Best Animated Short, beating out *Guard Dog*, a hilarious short by famed American animator Bill Plympton. Plympton spoke to a crowd of Victorians in Cinecenta two weeks ago before a screening of his latest feature, *Hair High*, as part of the Victoria Independent Film and Video Festival.

Oscar Fashion

by Stephanie Baker

The Oscars were full of "dooded up" stars who thanked their lawyers in their acceptance speeches.

But before the show even started, it was evident that some of the stars had left their fashion sense at home. On the red carpet, several fashion faux pas were committed by well-known actors.

Johnny Depp looked like he'd stepped out of *Back to the Future* with a custom-made blue tuxedo that would look better on a hanger in the Costume Palace than on him. Not only was Depp's spotty facial hair a problem, he was also sporting the gold teeth left over from *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Interviewer Ben Mulroney noticed and asked the awkward question, "Can I see your teeth?"

Natalie Portman's gown should have echoed the fashion of Greco-Roman times, but instead it looked like she was wearing a sack of potatoes. Renée Zellweger should have looked lovely in her red Carolina Herrera gown. Instead she came across as scary, with a spindly-thin figure that looked like it could be snapped in two, conforming to the Hollywood law that "thin is in."

Ever since the show became televised and, thus, commercialized in 1953, it has become more about what actors look like than what they say. More and more, the actors seem to reflect the coveted golden statue—they look pretty but have nothing to say. Strangely enough, while the content of acceptance speeches has become increasingly vapid, the speeches keep getting longer. The orchestra hired for the Sunday gave each winner 30 seconds before they drowned out whatever drivel was coming out of his or her mouth.

The looks were varied, the gowns were, as usual, ridiculously expensive, and most of the actors looked even less human than they do on screen. Thanks, Hollywood, for helping normal-looking people feel horribly insecure about their looks.

You're so vain.

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Art show at UVic depicts horror, hope

What: *Truth-Compassion-Tolerance International Art Exhibit*
When: March 6, 12–8 p.m. and **March** 7, 12–5 p.m.
Where: UVic Cadboro Commons Bldg., Arbutus Queenswood Room
How Much: Free

by Matthew Simon

A talented group of visual artists has put together a fine art exhibit that has been on display in Toronto, Washington, D.C. New York and Seoul. The show, *Truth-Compassion-Tolerance International Art Exhibit*, explores the manifestation of good and evil in the context of a modern atrocity—the brutal persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China.

Falun Gong is a traditional exercise and meditation practice that has been viciously persecuted in China since 1999. The practice had more followers than the Communist party, and it is widely believed that then-president Jiang Zemin saw it as a threat to his power or to the atheistic ideology of the state.

This exhibition is a combination of works by Prof. Kunlun Zhang and more than 20 other artists from four continents. Zhang, a Canadian citizen and past visiting scholar at McGill University, was an Amnesty International "Prisoner of Conscience" in China, where he was imprisoned and tortured for practising Falun Gong. He was crippled for months as a result of repeated beatings and high-voltage electric shocks inflicted by prison guards. Thanks to the efforts of the Canadian government and human rights groups, Zhang was released in 2001. One of the artists is still illegally imprisoned in China, and his work is now his only voice.

The anguish, hope and valour experienced by some of the artists while imprisoned in China is depicted in their work, and we are reminded that, when persecution meets the principle of Truth-Compassion-Tolerance, ordinary people become extraordinary. Falun Gong practitioners have responded to hatred, torture and killing with a spirit of great compassion and forbearance, thereby upholding justice and dignity for all humanity.

Artist Kathy Gillis says that, with the piece *The People's Tribunal*, she wanted to show that this persecution affects us all.

"I wanted to give the viewers a chance to relate to it and not to think of it as something happening in another country but rather happening right here," she says. "People just want to dismiss it—they think because it's on the other side of the Earth it doesn't affect them. It does affect them."

The 40 pieces that compose the exhibition are divided into five categories: Harmony, Enlightenment, Adversity, Courage and Justice, including oil paintings, ink drawings and pastel drawings. The overall style is realistic and original, and many of the artists used traditional artistic methods to achieve their goals.

Visit www.falundafaartexhibit.net for more information.

PROVIDED IMAGE
Pastel: *Genocide* by Wang Zhiping, 2004

Bagging on bling

Mos Def
The New Danger
Geffen

by Matthew Wilson

Mos Def, the talented rapper and now actor, has released his sophomore album after five years of waiting.

Pursuing his distinct style of reinventing himself over and over, Mos Def once again shows his fans that he is no typical rapper. He jumps from jazzy, slow jams on "The Panties" to bluesy, boogie-man riffs on "Blue Back Jack" to rage-rock bursts on various songs which are supported by his newly formed band, Black Jack Johnson, featuring Bad Brains guitarist, Dr. Know.

The album's main attraction is Mos Def's lyrical content. The spectrum of beats just lays the foundation for Mos's socially conscious, politically driven lyrical form which breathes a gasp of much needed fresh air for any rap fan suffocating in the genre's bling-bling.

As far as a sophomore effort goes, this is new, fresh and a step away from *Black on Both Sides*. But fans looking for straight beats and rhymes beware . . . this album must be accepted with an open mind. *The New Danger* has so much musical diversity, with its blend of hard guitar, bluesy-jazzy flow and beats that transcend the rap genre, it is hard to label. Not compromising any of his musical integrity or morals, Mos Def refuses to sell out in *The New Danger* and sticks to a creative formula that reinforces his status as one of rap's most important cats.

Attack of the cardboard puppets

What: Art show: *OCPD Strikes Home!*
When: Thursday, March 10
Where: UVic Visual Arts building
How Much: Free

by Ford Walker

Visual arts student Chris Lin is trying something new for his upcoming show, *OCPD Strikes Home!* Lin will destroy his beautiful, handmade puppets with the participation of the audience.

Describing it as an "an interactive puppet show/performance/happening [that] features life-sized cardboard puppets surviving an onslaught of recycled destruction," Lin will encourage audience members to attack his creations at the showing on March 10. Lin has recruited some of his friends to walk around with his giant cardboard mannequins draped over their chests, and he will supply harmless cardboard weapons to attack his creations.

"Everyone who goes inside will have to take a weapon," says Lin. "Those who do not want to participate can watch from outside." The problem remains, though, that it seems unlikely anyone would want to miss such a fun opportunity for mayhem.

Lin also notes that the display in which the puppets will be enshrined before the show adds to the effect. "Looking through the glass is like watching television," says Lin. Those that do not participate will be treated to an event much like television.

But what is the possible meaning of destroying a bunch of life-sized puppets? Lin specifically fashioned them to look like businessmen and police officers, representing a society that can be brought down through art. There is also a certain anime/giant robots-look to the mannequins, yet they remain unique in their own right. He has decided not to paint them, which is great because they look just right in paper brown. Outfitted with ties, pens, pocket protectors, badges and guns, Lin has paid great attention to detail and has obviously put a lot of work into this project.

This is not Chris Lin's first mayhem-inspired event. Taking the puppets downtown with a group of his puppeteers, Lin wanted them to impersonate the police and generally create a ruckus. The demonstration parallels the work of his comics, which are also named *OCPD*.

The actual show will take place in the Visual Arts building on Thursday, March 10. His puppets will be on display on the second floor of the building from March 6 until they're executed through recycling on the night of the performance. The event is free, and if you aren't willing to help in the destruction of art, you can still watch from outside.

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Worms above ground

An interview with the Arrogant Worms

by Graham Stark

On the day the Arrogant Worms performed in Victoria last week, they were told that a contestant on the new season of Canadian Idol used the Worms' famous song "Last Saskatchewan Pirate" in an audition.

"They asked us for clearance to air it, which either means he sang well or really poorly," jokes bassist Chris Patterson, one-third of Canada's best-known comedy band.

The Worms came back to Victoria for the third consecutive year after rediscovering the city as a place with a huge local following. No strangers to the town, the group played the Fringe Festival in the early '90s, and one year made an appearance at the Victoria Street Performers Festival. However, their first big gig in Victoria was many years ago, at Legends nightclub. It didn't go well.

"That was when we basically gave up on Victoria as a venue," Patterson points out. In 2002 they were convinced to return and play the Victoria Conservatory of Music's Alix Goolden Hall, a venue they love and have since returned to annually. Unlike Legends, they say, the Goolden Hall "feels like it's above ground."

While the 2002 show was in promotion of their ninth album, *Idiot Road,* and the 2003 show for their tenth, *Toast,* this current tour is, as Patterson puts it, "for the money." He quickly corrected himself, saying, "I mean, the love of music." Vocalist Trevor Strong puts it more succinctly: "We're donating all proceeds from the show to us." Apparently they pressed too many copies of *Toast* and are giving the album another tour, hitting a huge number of dates in the Gulf Islands.

They are, however, working on a new album, two songs of which they "road-tested" during their Victoria show to great response from the diverse crowd. "We get more teenagers here than almost anywhere else," says Patterson of our city—a city the Worms describe as having their youngest audience, "which is weird because I can't imagine they saw the Legends show."

Strong figures that "everyone who did see the Legends show went home and procreated because we rocked so hard." More likely word of mouth and MP3s have more to do with their Victorian fanbase.

Though the subject of digital copyright is a road well travelled by musicians, the Worms have had interesting experiences with it. "Our repertoire has now expanded thanks to the Internet," says Strong, explaining that there are a great many songs often attributed to the Worms that simply aren't theirs. Bands such as Bowser and Blue and Three Dead Trolls in a Baggie have had their songs wrongly credited to the Worms by purveyors of MP3s.

PROVIDED PHOTO

Trevor Strong, Mike McCormick and Chris Patterson spread joy.

Strong doesn't see this as such a bad thing, necessarily: "Most of the songs that people say are ours, at least they're all pretty good songs."

As for work that legitimately is theirs, the Worms see MP3 audio as the new form of radio play, and since they don't get played on the radio, that's perfect for them. As an added bonus, when someone in the audience yells out a request for a song that isn't theirs, the Worms can have fun at the fan's expense. Or as Chris puts it: "Sometimes the audience needs a little smackdown."

With 150 more people in attendance than last year, the Worms played to a packed Alix Goolden Hall. They performed two 45-minute sets and two encores for a crowd that would have had them there all night if there'd been any choice in the matter. If you've only heard the Arrogant Worms on their albums, you're missing out on half of the experience. The presence and chemistry that this trio has on stage is phenomenal and can keep an audience of any age entertained for hours.

The show featured a smattering of new material and a few older, less-played tracks, but mostly it was the standard crowd favourites, like "Rocks & Trees," "Celine Dion," "Last Saskatchewan Pirate" and—due to refusal of participation by Strong and Patterson—a solo piece from Mike McCormick, the tallest and least talkative of the Worms, entitled "I Pulled My Groin."

For The Arrogant Worms and their fans, the live shows are a big part of who they are, so much so that *Toast* was recorded live and includes plenty of hilarious inter-song banter from the group. "It only took us 10 albums to figure that one out," says Trevor. "We get around to things eventually."

The Worms' current releases are the album *Toast* and the DVD *Three Worms and an Orchestra.* Trevor Strong has also written a self-help book entitled *Get Stupid.*

Victoria rockers Morning Call go south to sign

by Rebecca Peric

Morning Call formed in January of 2004 as the band Undergo came to an end. Sashco Bogdanov, Paul Payne and Nathan Brophy, members of the late Undergo, decided to start up a new band which they dubbed Morning Call after a hit Undergo song.

"It was fit for what we were doing—starting something new," said Brandon Mason as he and Travis Gingrich sat on the Steamer's patio before their show on Feb. 24.

And so the trio set off in search of a singer. After a few months of trying out different vocalists, they auditioned their friend Brandon Mason, who became the band's lead singer one month later.

The band worked on a demo and sent it off to Richard Reins of Drive-Thru Records. The demo was a success, got the band a showcase in California and led them to a record deal.

"We've been slammed on the 'net, people saying we don't deserve to be signed after only one year, that they know bands that have been together for years that are better than us, that deserve to be signed," says Mason. "It's different now, though. Scouts used to come out to shows, but now there are too many bands. A band has to go to the label."

Going to the label is exactly what they did. Taking time off, they drove down to California (in a Honda Civic, no less) with hopes of Drive-Thru taking them on. In August 2004 they were told that Drive-Thru wanted to sign them, and in December the deal was done.

Morning Call is the first international band to be signed with Drive-Thru. Because it's an American label, the band will definitely be touring around the States a lot, but they're hoping to bring more U.S. bands up to Canada, along with their fans.

"I thought we'd have our hand held, that they'd be like, 'Here's your paycheck, see you at the show,'" Mason recalls. But life as a signed band wasn't as easy as he thought it would be. Each and every day they had more and more to do: practise, deal with a manager, take time for interviews. "But I'd rather be busy every day than doing nothing."

Morning Call had been looking for a second guitarist for a while, and in January 2005 they asked Gingrich to play. He went to one of their concerts, liked the music and e-mailed the band.

"For the last four years I've been sitting at UVic in a classroom, thinking 'This is not what I want to do with my life,'" Gingrich says with a smile. "This is what I want to do—play in a band and travel the world."

Although Undergo was a heavy band with heavy music and heavy vocals, Morning Call wanted to move away from that. "One day screamo will be out like a synthesizer," Mason says as Gingrich laughs. "I sing the way I do, and apparently that's a little poppy."

And it's obvious their fans think they made the right choice with the genre change, cheering them on and yelling out "I love you."

"Some days I just don't want to play, but when I get to a show it just wipes the slate clean," Mason says. Their loyal fan-base is given the notice it deserves, as Mason's voice sounds out over the crowd at the end of their set: "We love you guys, honestly. Thank you so much."

Morning Call will be touring through the United States for the month of March and will then return to Victoria to record their full-length album.

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BAND PROFILE | THE RAYGUN

The reason to Raygun

by Adam Nelson Humphreys

Hey you! Yeah, you! Are you discouraged from attending rock shows in Victoria due to the omnipresence of pretentious hipsters who just can't seem to have a good time to save their lives?

For those of you who can relate, you better check yourself before you wreck yourself and go see the Raygun. I had a chance to catch up with these "art-damaged post-whatevers" over a pitcher of beer and a heaping plate of cheesy nachos a few days back.

The Raygun is a five-piece rock outfit, currently residing and rocking out in this very city, that has just released its first EP entitled *Ah Ah Ah*. What they want is to make you dance, and they intend to achieve that goal through propulsively fun, upbeat rock tunes. Their mindset: a "let's have some fun and cut up the rug" mentality that arises out of, and in opposition to, the pretentious hipsters described above.

If you go to a Raygun show, make sure you bring your boogie shoes. "When people don't dance, we get sad," explains keyboardist Callianne Bachman. After all, even when you hear a rocking dance anthem at a show, in the end, the decision to get down is your own.

Guitarist Mike Baker likens this decision to the wisdom of Captain Planet—"the power is yours"—only this time the good fight of environmental activism is replaced by a concern for the well-being of your night out. Face it—you will have a better time if you dance, and if you disagree, you're probably taking yourself too seriously.

PROVIDED PHOTO

The band cites Gang of Four and Joy Division among their influences.

The songwriting on the first EP was largely taken care of by lead singer Xavier Ames and founding member Jason Webster, though they acknowledge the fact that every song becomes something completely different once it gets into the hands of the other members. This results in a style that is in constant evolution, and a band that is constantly moving in new directions.

The band cites post-punk influences such as Gang of Four and Joy Division as well as more contemporary Canadian funsters such as the Unicorns, the Constantines, and the Shapes and Sizes, as well as a seemingly obscure reference to the cherished Dance Mix '93 compilation. The typical Raygun song goes something like this: Ames howls, coos, screams and sings over Bachman's organ/synth flavour, high BPM drums and Webster's bass lines. Then, all of a sudden Baker's guitar lunges through the mix like an angry cheetah, affording the listener the chance to spaz out whenever he or she sees fit.

In the near future, the band plans to move off of the Island and hopefully tour the nation to "show Canada what's going on in Canada." If you want to know what's going on in Canada you can check out The Raygun's EP *Ah Ah Ah* at Ditch Records. They put all of the cover art together themselves with glue sticks and construction paper. How's that for authenticity?

Birds Without Wings a grand historical epic

Birds Without Wings
By Louis de Bernières
Knopf Canada

by David Crow

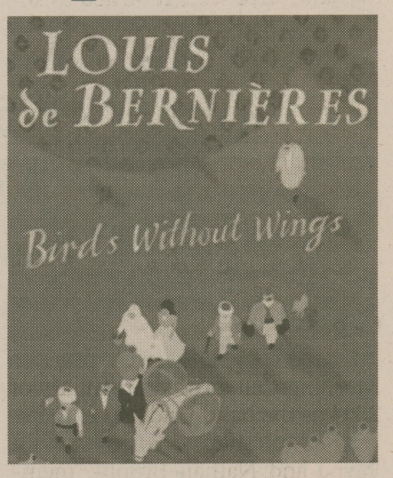
Imagine an idyllic rural town near the southern coast of Turkey, beset this year with a surprising crop of pink poppies that grow amidst the sun-soaked scrub, a land of olive trees, of squid drying on lines, of thoughtful potters, good-natured *imams* (Muslim clerics) and lively gossip. A honeyed harmony exists within the town, and the troubles of the outside world are but distant wisps. Now, imagine all of this is torn apart and soon all that remain are ruins and orphaned children.

Such is the tale of *Birds Without Wings*, a long-winded yet irrepressible novel by Louis de Bernières. The town is literal, a place named Eskibahçe, not far from modern-day Izmir, and the tearing is accomplished by the series of bloody wars that engulfed the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, eventually resulting in its demise.

The novel begins by mentioning the death of the lovely Christian girl Philotei and the madness of her childhood love, the goatherd Ibrahim, and then proceeds upon a long and meandering route through the stories of a large host of characters, until finally these events are explained. The product of 10 years of work, *Birds* is history-laden and tragic to an even greater extent than *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, de Bernières's most familiar novel. It is also a weighty read, encompassing 576 pages in the hardcover edition, but it manages both its length and its considerable number of subplots admirably.

Obviously, the great number of characters renders the majority of them peripheral. Indeed, the main player on this stage is the village itself and the historical horrors that descend upon it. "All war is fratricide," de Bernières states, and also, "Destiny caresses the few, and molests the many." He then proceeds to repeatedly beat this message into his reader's heads, something that had left more than a few reviewers bristling but has also earned the book a number of hasty comparisons to Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

In all, the sun-soaked, pastoral side of *Birds* is intensely enjoyable, and the historical aspects inform us about a much-overlooked section of the globe. Readers who enjoyed *Captain Corelli* will most likely also appreciate this novel, which includes a return cameo by the amiable crone Drosoula. But be warned: this is obviously de Bernières's attempt at an epic, and those who dislike grand, sweeping narrative should perhaps look elsewhere.



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MOVIE REVIEW | MAN OF THE HOUSE

An unholy hybrid

by Stephanie Bowen

What do you get when you mix a no-nonsense Texas Ranger with a gaggle of cheerleaders who have witnessed a murder?

Predictable, utterly forgettable comedy, that's what. More precisely, you get the newly released *Man of the House.*

Though 30 seconds of the film are all you need for complete plot comprehension, here's the zany lowdown: Tommy Lee Jones is Roland Sharp, a straight-shooting Texas Ranger sporting every bad Ranger cliché right down, or rather right up, to his enormous cowboy hat. Anne, Therese, Evie, Barb and Heather are the silly pep-squadders, boasting every cheerleading stereotype down to orange tans and limited vocabulary. The two parties meet under the most unlikely circumstances, instantly dislike one another but end up forming deep, character-altering bonds.

Like, gag me.

Whatever possessed someone to cast Cedric the Entertainer as an ex-cheerleader-come-minister or, better still, cast Tommy Lee Jones as the lead in a comedy, is beyond me. Yet there they are, learning valuable life lessons while solving mysteries and eliciting cheap laughs.

Everyone, that is, except the audience.

Unfortunately, this is not a new formula for studio film. It may have begun in 1993 with Hulk Hogan playing nanny to two children in the shrewdly titled *Mr. Nanny*, or perhaps it began as far back as 1990's *Kindergarten Cop*, when future Gov. Schwarzenegger found himself teaching a bunch of five-year-olds the Pledge of Allegiance. Whichever the case, an unnecessary mix of domestic humour and violence spawned an unnatural, unholy hybrid: that of the sentimental-action-comedy.

Hollywood, you've created a monster.

It almost seems as though film executives are trying to corner the entire date-night market in one fell swoop. After all, what could be better for the assumed hetero audience than a movie that incorporates aspects of both "girl" movies and "boy" movies, all at one low price? But unlike *Kill Bill* and its art-house counterparts, which successfully entangle the finer points of many genres, these new mainstream crossbreeds hack together corny comedy, love scenes and big explosions with shameless disregard for actual filmmaking. Perhaps someone should remind execs of the "less is more" paradigm: packing bits and pieces of every hit you've ever had at the box office does not guarantee another hit and often leads to mixed-up monstrosities like *Man of the House.*

In trying to be a film for everyone, it becomes a film for no one.

PROVIDED PHOTO

Wes Borg, left, and Neil Grahn plunder the Internet for precious comedy.

Geek Show awkward in social situations

by Steven Masuch

Touting itself as "more fun than mowing your lawn," *The Geek Show* is actually more boring, more annoying and more painful than mowing your lawn in a cool spring breeze. It's even less fun than cutting down foot-high grass with nail clippers in the heat of summer.

We all know what it's like to have a friend force us to watch the latest hilarious Flash cartoon they've found, even though you've seen it 17 times before. *The Geek Show* is that annoying experience, stretched out over half an hour.

Neil Grahn and Wes Borg, two members of the Canadian comedy band Three Dead Trolls in a Baggie, write, direct, produce and star in television's *The Geek Show*. It's a low-budget show about the Internet and "stuff online that's funny." If they had found better stuff, or perhaps written something of their own that's funny, it might have been a show worth watching.

As it is now, the show is a mash of old Flash cartoons, excerpts from old public-domain movies and features by the hosts, all presented in the setting of Wes's living room.

Almost all of the show's content is Flash cartoons, movies and writing taken from websites. Some are public domain, such as the movies from the Prelinger Archives at www.archive.org. Others, such as Strong Bad cartoons from www.homestarrunner.com, have been produced for Internet comedy sites and are reused by *The Geek Show.*

Many of the pieces from the Internet are fairly old. The Strong Bad e-mails have been out for months, if not years. The movie shorts are from the 1950s. One episode has two cartoons about the Metallica/Napster controversy, five years after it was resolved. Topical humour and low-quality animation do not make good television.

Some of the shorts are produced by Neil and Wes themselves. One of these is *The Little Tank that Could*, a cartoon about a Canadian Leopard tank in Iraq narrated in the style of the children's book *The Little Engine That Could*. Unfortunately, the cartoon is both poorly animated and written as a political satire that isn't very funny.

Between the comedy shorts, the hosts try to entertain their four-person audience seated on the viewing couch with quick speeches and information about the segments. This audience is usually made up of friends, Albertan celebrities and, in one episode, teenagers.

It's a telling sign that the teenagers, the people you would expect to be most familiar with Internet humour, barely laughed at all.

The Geek Show airs on ACCESS, CLT, and Book Television.

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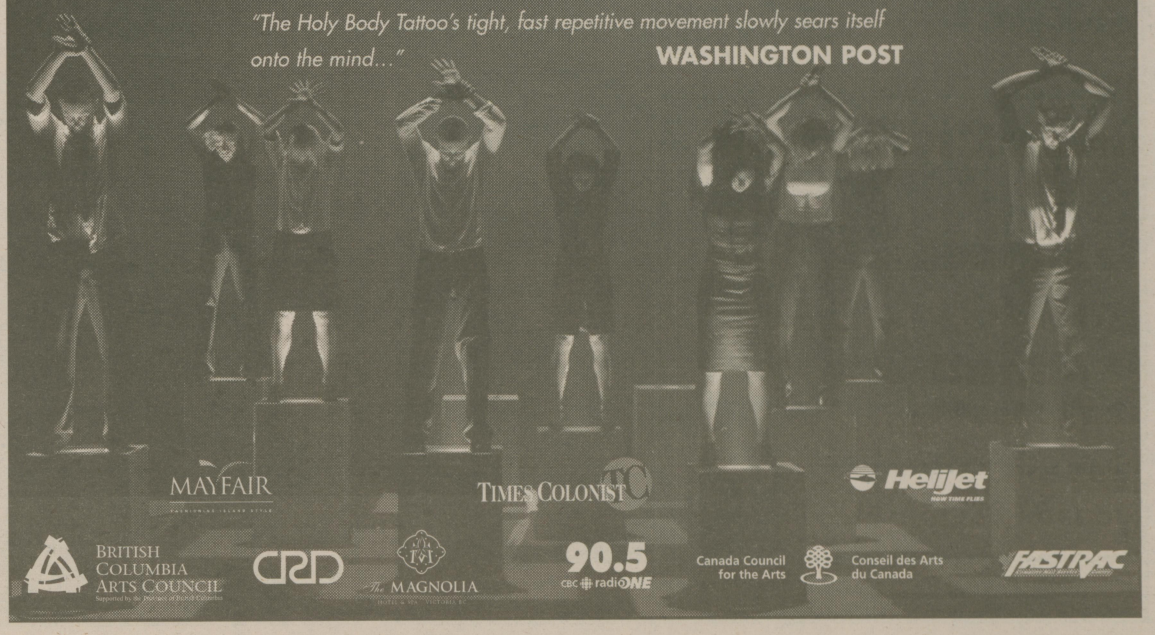

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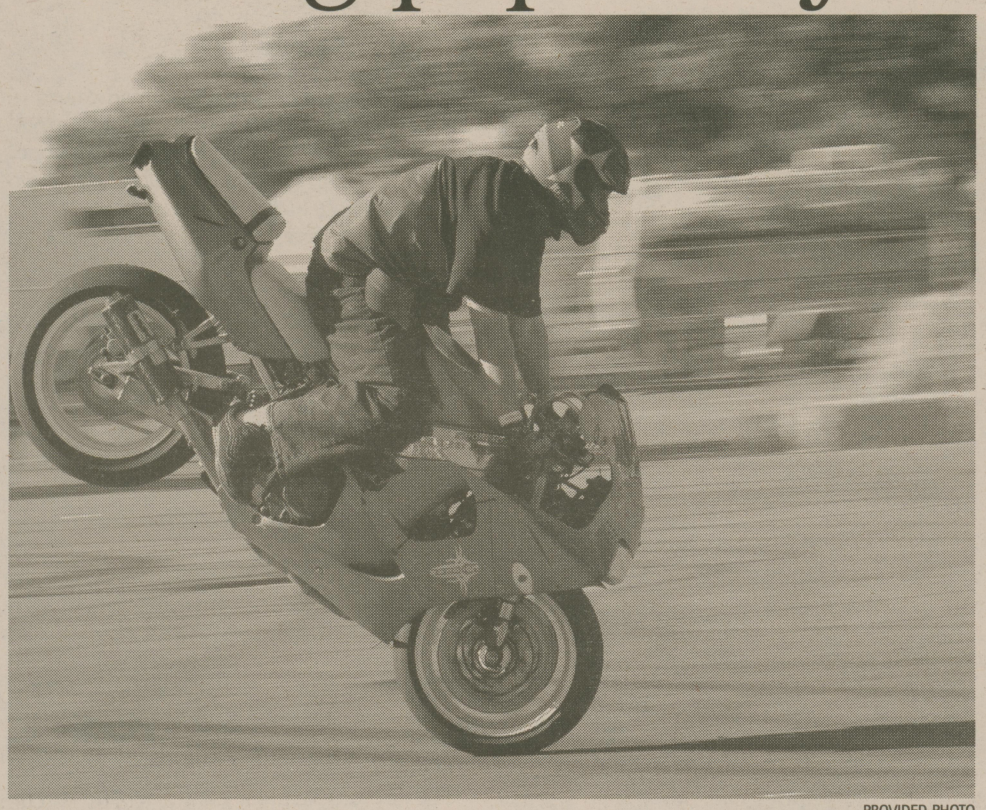
Streetbike stunting popularity on the rise

BC's eXtremeriderz duo debuts first DVD: *Rock the 40oz.*

by Matthew Gauk



PROVIDED PHOTO

Brake-stands, and the like, are a major part of the eXtremeriderz repetoire.

It must be nice to not feel pain. That's the first thing that comes to mind when watching *Rock the 40oz*, the debut DVD by local motorcycle stunt team eXtremeriderz. More than anything, *Rock the 40oz.* is a showcase of refined skill and balls-out toughness.

Shot over the last few years, *Rock the 40oz.* also includes footage from Western Speedway in Victoria, Cypress Mountain in Vancouver, and the annual motorcycle meet Sportbike West in B.C.'s interior.

The eXtremeriderz, Chris Fisher and his teammate JB, operate out of Vancouver and Victoria and are sponsored by local motorcycle and paint shops.

Like most extreme motorsports of the last few years, streetbike stunting is becoming more popular. The scene has gone from isolated riders and small pioneering groups doing wheelies or standing on their seats to large stunt groups with riders capable of pulling 12 o'clock, no-hander wheelies, high-chair endos (back of bike in air and feet over bars) and ape hangers (wheelie while dragging body on ground).

Fisher said it is difficult to find events where they can bring their show.

It requires days on end on the phone, calling up racetracks and the like all over the United States and Canada.

"It's pretty tough. No one takes it seriously here in Canada," he said. "In the U.S., stunt shows and competitions are huge."

Fisher said that stunting has been around in Europe for some time and is finally making a breakthrough in Canada. He said Canada's weather is a major factor, since it only allows for a few good riding months throughout the year.

About four years ago, eXtremeriderz was started. Fisher and JB met in Vancouver, and the two started riding together. The idea for a professional stunt team occurred to them while watching a video by Starboyz, a stunt group out of Akron, Ohio.

"We always knew we were going to make a movie. It was just a question of when," Fisher said. After accumulating hundreds of hours of digital video using regular, gas tank and helmet cameras, *Rock the 40oz.* was born.

Most of the stunts in *Rock the 40oz.* were done at shows and competitions, or in private parking lots, but some were done on public roads. In legal terms, stunting exists in a sort of grey area. Many riders get busted regularly for doing motorcycle stunts in the streets, but some police officers turn a blind eye to the issue if it's done in a safe manner. Groups of riders will often go out into rural areas specifically to practise stunting, and while the police usually show up, they seldom issue tickets.

"I've never had a ticket on my bike, but I definitely don't always obey the law," Fisher said.

Plans for eXtremeriderz in the near future include a trip to the Edmonton Indy and a possible sponsorship by Red Bull, a company who has already had unprecedented success in supporting up and coming extreme motorsports.

Rock the 40oz. is going to be distributed by Impact Video in the U.S., Rogers Video in Canada, and will be sold in motorcycle shops throughout B.C.

Pre-orders of the video and more information about eXtremeriderz can be found on the pair's website, www.extremeriderz.com.

Good athletes are a blessing from the gods

by Chris Black, *The Silhouette* (McMaster University)

HAMILTON (CUP) — It seems as if God has become quite the sports fan lately, judging from all the quotes we've been reading. If you're ever attending an NBA or NFL game, hang around a bit after the buzzer has sounded. In at least half of the NBA games—and every single NFL contest—players from both teams will congregate and say a prayer.

When the reporters start filing into the locker rooms as well, chances are good that whomever the star player of the day was—be it Terrell Owens, Ray Lewis or Kurt Warner—he will proclaim that God was on his side and made it possible.

Isaac Bruce, one of the greatest wide receivers of this generation, has made some of the more outlandish religious claims after his football exploits. Bruce maintains that his utterance of the word "Jesus" healed a groin injury and saved him from a car crash. He also believes that after he had to adjust for a bad pass in the Super Bowl, "I just sat back, and God did the rest." In a recent interview with *GQ*, Bruce said that after a bad first half in a regular season game, "God really manifested himself in the third quarter. I had 89 yards."

Of course, many people mock claims such as these. Realists point out that those 89 yards probably had a lot more to do with Bruce's quarterback instead of the sudden interest Jesus took in a St. Louis Rams game.

Terrell Owens, this year's Super Bowl focal point, is perhaps the most talented and most hated player in the NFL. He has averaged 90 catches, 1,300 yards and 13 touchdown passes per year the last five seasons. But for all his accomplishments, he is probably better known for his ego and his touchdown celebrations than his talent. Unfortunately, that tends to happen when you celebrate by taking a marker out of your sock, autographing the football, and handing it to a fan—or taking pom-poms out of the hands of a cheerleader and doing a dance for the crowd.

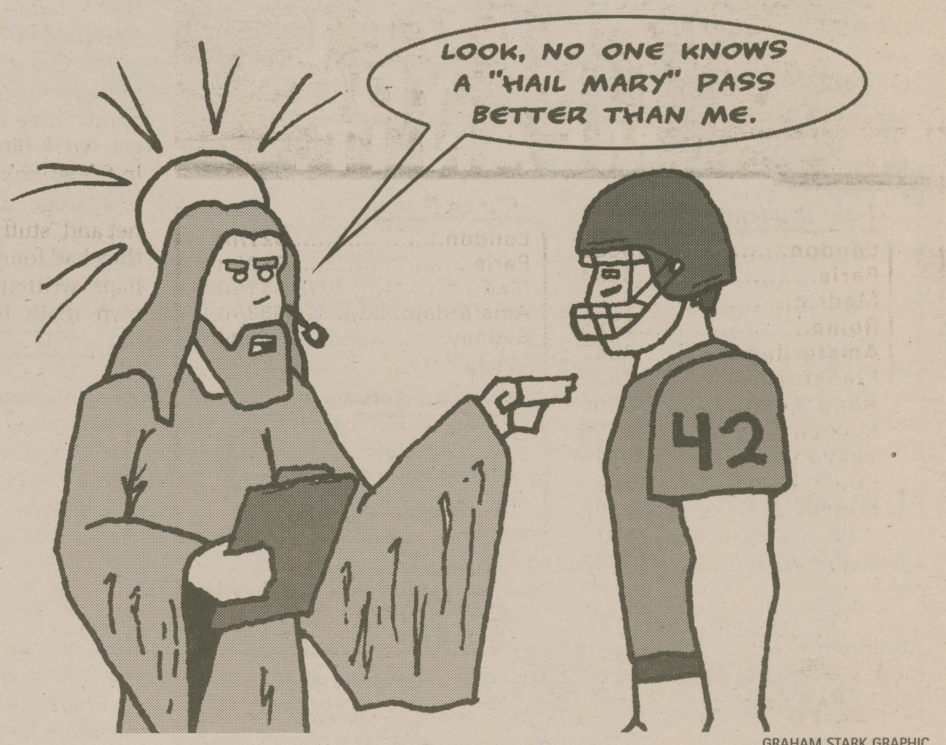
Needless to say, Owens has been a lightning rod for criticism these past few years, and columnists from *Sports Illustrated* to *the Akron Daily* are jumping on his proclamations.

"I got hurt for a reason. I understand that—a lot of people don't," Owens says. "Just by the timing of me getting hurt, [God] had to sit me down and put things into perspective for me. He put me on the biggest stage of my life to show people how great He is."

For the record, I think Owens's beliefs are unrealistic, but they are his beliefs. It's for that reason that I don't think I, or anyone else for that matter, have the right to criticize him. Judge him for his play on the field or for his celebrations (which are hilarious, by the way), but don't criticize him because he believes in the power of the Almighty.

I find it somewhat hypocritical that the press chooses to criticize certain players for religion. While some athletes, such as Steve Young or Mark McGwire, are praised for their religious beliefs, others are criticized.

This hypocrisy can be found throughout the history of sports. Sandy Koufax (Judaism) and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (Islam) were pounded in the press for their beliefs. Koufax, one of the greatest pitchers of all-time, took heat across the country back in the '60s when he decided to sit out a playoff game to observe Yom Kippur. It took years for people to actually call Abdul-Jabbar, the NBA's top point-scorer of all time, by his name. Many journalists refused to acknowledge his Muslim name and instead referred to him by his name from his college days, Lew Alcindor.



GRAHAM STARK GRAPHIC

Isn't it ironic that the American press will criticize the poor black athlete from the South, and a Jew and a Muslim for mixing their religion and sport, but clean-cut, blue-eyed darlings like McGwire and Young get a free pass?

Does any god care about sports? Probably not. Regardless, the press should respect the beliefs athletes hold.

BASKETBALL BRIEFS

The Vikes women's basketball team has advanced to the CIS championship, taking bronze in the Canada West finals last weekend.

The Vikes first game of the Canada West final was against the undefeated SFU Clan. The Clan was able continued their streak, beating the Vikes, 73–60.

The next day UVic defeated UBC to win the bronze medal. In the second half UVic overcame a 14-point deficit to defeat UBC by a final score of 63–56.

The Vikes now head to Winnipeg for the CIS championship. The last time the Vikes won the national championship was 2003.

Vikes to take on Vancouver Whitecaps

by Gavin Day

University of Victoria soccer fans should mark their calendars for Saturday, April 2, as the National Soccer Champion Vikes will be play host to the Vancouver Whitecaps at Centennial Stadium.

The Whitecaps are members of the United Soccer Leagues' A-League. This is the first time UVic soccer has had the opportunity to play a professional team.

The purpose of this match is to help promote grassroots soccer in Victoria. By pitting the best university team in the country against a professional team—one that features many players who have played for the national team—both the Vikes and Whitecaps are looking to build stronger ties to local soccer organizations.

"It's a great opportunity for our program," Clint Hamilton, director of Athletics and Recreation, said. "It allows our community to witness great Canadian soccer and [UVic] to continue building a partnership."

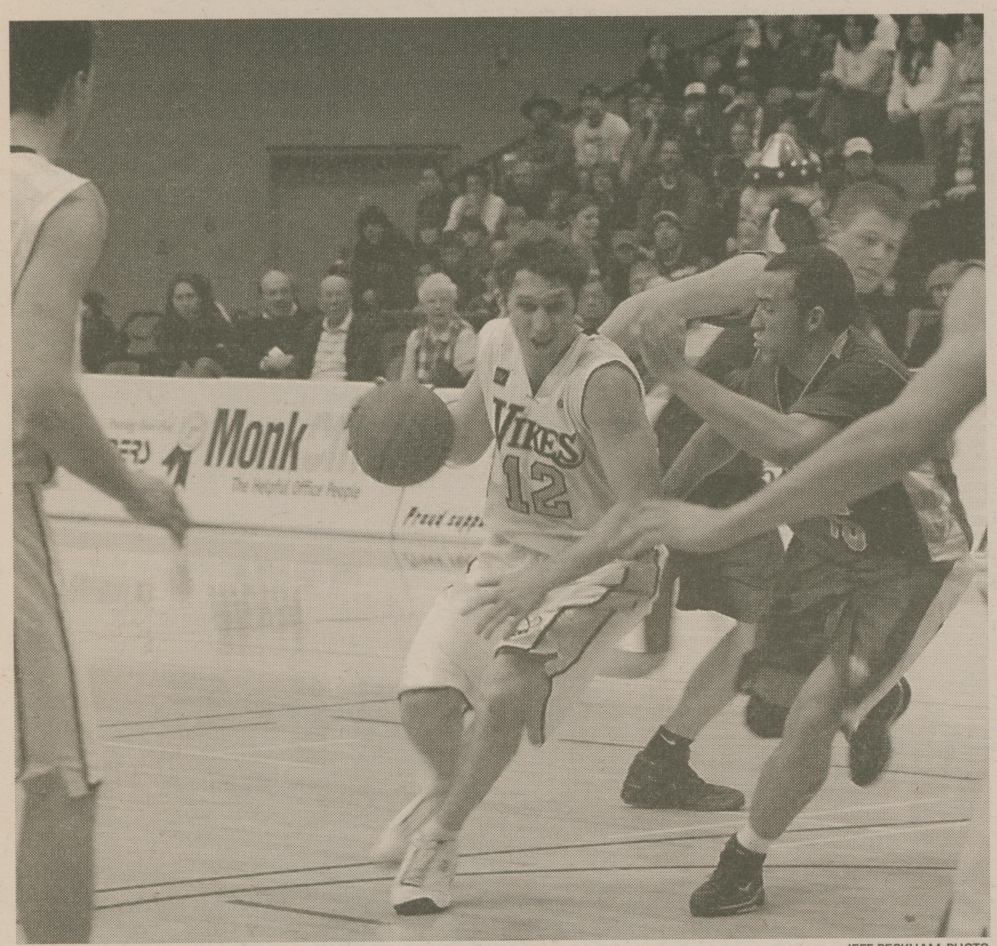
Youth players seeing this kind of high-caliber soccer will certainly be inspired to improve. The event hopes to reach out to the younger community by allowing youth players to purchase tickets at a cut rate.

The Whitecaps are looking to build up a stronger fan-base outside the Lower Mainland area. They are hoping to get back to a time when the Whitecaps enjoyed great success in British Columbia. Coach Bob Lenarduzzi mentioned the 1979 North American Soccer League (no longer in existence) title for the Whitecaps. He said he remembered going to Nanaimo after winning the title where a massive parade was being held in their honour.

The league the Whitecaps play in now, the A-League, is the highest level of soccer in Canada and is one notch below the United States' Major League Soccer. The A-league features teams in Canada, the U.S. and Puerto Rico. After last year the teams in Edmonton and Calgary folded, leaving markets in Montreal (last year's champions), Vancouver and Toronto.

Many Vikes have gone on to play for the Whitecaps. Currently on the roster are former Vikes Nico Craveiro and Geordie Lyall. Even current Vikes Christ Craveiro and Trevor Stiles have had stints with the Whitecaps.

Vikes basketball heading off to Final Four



JEFF PECKHAM PHOTO

Chris Trumpy wrestles his way to the hoop against a desperate UBC Thunderbird.

by Martlet Staff

The Vikes men's basketball team advanced to the Canada West Final Four this past weekend by defeating their old rivals, the University of British Columbia (UBC) Thunderbirds in two games of a best-of-three series.

In their first game on Friday the Vikes defeated UBC 87–78.

The Vikes set the pace by being first on the board with a jumper by Steve Moore and within the first eight minutes extended their point lead to 14.

Once UBC found their rhythm they were able to reduce the deficit late in the first half. Led by Casey Archibald's shooting, the Thunderbirds scored 10 unanswered points to cut the Vikes lead to six with eight minutes left to go.

But the first half would remain UVic's. By the buzzer the Vikes were shooting 51 per cent from the floor and were once again up 14 points, 47–33.

This certainly was not the case in the second. UBC came out strong in the second half, winding down the Vikes lead to between two and four points.

The key to UBC's glory in the second was removing the Vikes positioning to gain the upper hand on rebounds.

But UBC was unable to completely dominate the game. Led by Chris Trumpy's 13 and Brandon Ellis' seven second-half points, the Vikes were able to maintain the lead.

With just over a minute left, the game was down to the difference of a single basket. Starting with Mitch Gudgeon's converted rebound late in the half, and a series of fouls, the Vikes were able to hold on to the lead and take the first game of the series.

The second game on Saturday was much closer, but the Vikes squeaked by the Thunderbirds 73-70 to take the series.

Right from the tip-off UBC showed they were a different team in game two. Though the Vikes' defensive game zoned in on Archibald and forced UBC's offence to throw the ball around, by the mid-mark of the first half the Thunderbirds were up by eight points.

It wasn't until late in the first half when the Vikes began to turn up the pressure. With two minutes left in the game they reduced the point spread to a single point.

In the final minute the Vikes were able to take the lead off Gudgeon's efforts. During a scrum on the floor, vying for possession, he was able to pry the ball from four UBC players. An ensuing pass got the ball out to Moore for a three-pointer, which put the Vikes up 37–36 at the half.

During the second half both teams exchanged the lead off successive scoring drives. But with only eight seconds left on the clock and the Vikes up 71–70, UBC fouled Gudgeon, putting him on the line and giving him the chance to put the game away. Gudgeon hit both free throws, and the Vikes walked away with the Pacific Division title.

The Canada West Final Four will be played on March 4 and 5 at the University of Alberta.

Classifieds

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experience a must!! Please apply in person Mon-Fri between 7 and 3pm @
James Bay Esso, 308 Menzies Street.

AUDITIONS-
The Victoria Shakespeare Society, Summer 2005 Festival. Auditions for "Cymbeline" and "A Midsummer's Night Dream."
ACTORS
Sat. Mar 5, 10:00-4:00 and Sun. Mar 6, 1:00-4:00. Callbacks Sun. Mar 13, 1:00-4:00. St Aidan's Church Hall 3703 St Aidan's (at Cedar Hill Rd and Richmond).
We also need Stage Crew. Stage Managers, Assit.S.M. Costume, Props, Set Design, and Front of House...Everyone!
Call 477 6464 or email: malpenart@shaw.ca for info.

CAMP COUNSELORS wanted for private Michigan boys/girls summer overnight camps. Teach swimming, canoeing, skiing, sailing, sports, computers, tennis, archery, riding, crafts, climbing, windsurfing & more! Office, maintenance jobs too. Salary $1750 on up plus room/bd. Find out more about our camps and apply online at:
www.greenwoodscamp.com <http://www.greenwoodscamp.com/>, or call 888-459-2492.

Expertise help wanted to teach me Photoshop Elements, Front Page, Simply Accounting & Power Point. My home close to UVic $15 per hour, flexible hours. 881-4440.

Part-time bookkeeper wanted. My home $15 per hour, flexible hours. Kathryn 881-4440.

Gamers Wanted!
Recruit gamers for Video Game Centre, Earn $75.00 minimum for every 10 gamers referred plus bonus. Includes 8 hrs free play monthly. Call The Game Academy 477-5211.

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VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Canadians for Ethical Treatment of Food Animals are looking for members to take an active part in their organization. Our mission is "a stress-free life and a humane death for food animals." Contact L. Dymond at 388-5165 or littlerockstables@shaw.ca

Volunteer your time to assist someone who wants to get out and be active! Many male children and adults with disabilities are motivated to participation in new activities but are in need of assistance! Recreation Integration Victoria is looking for volunteers to provide one-on-one assistance for people with disabilities in a recreational setting. To get involved or for more info. call Brynna at 477-6314.

ON CAMPUS

UVSS COVER CONTEST

Get **your** artwork on the cover of the 2005/06 Handbook! Please submit work to Susan Farmer in the **SUB Resource Centre** by *Friday March 4 at 4p.m.*. Details at www.uvss.uvic.ca.

The University of Victoria Student Animal Legal Defense Fund is pleased to announce our hosting of ecofeminist and author Carol J. Adams. She will be presenting her slideshow on The Sexual Politics of Meat, on Sunday, April 3 at 7 p.m. in Room 158 in the Faculty of Law Fraser Building. Her presentation will be followed by a book signing and vegan reception.
For more info go to www.law.uvic.ca/saldf

GSS Documentary Film Night
Screening: "FBI's War on Black America" in the Grad Lounge. Come celebrate Black History with the GSS at this month's Documentary Film Night! This free event begins at 6pm with the GSS Political Action Committee Meeting in room 108, followed by the 7pm film screening.

Take the "ONE-TONNE CHALLANGE"
and do your part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions! www.co2zilla.ca or www.www.climatechange.gc.ca
For more info on how you can reduce greenhouse gasses affecting climate change, contact the University of Victoria Sustainability Project at 721-7355 or uvsp@uvic.ca

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FREE FUN! Capture the Flag. We meet at Market Square Gates on Johnson Street at 2am on Saturday nights/Sunday mornings. Bring nothing but your gusto for the game.

FUNDRAISER SWAP N' SHOP - Saturday, March 5th 2005, from 08:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at l'École Victor-Brodeur, 2780 Richmond Road in the gymnasium. FREE ADMISSION. We are looking for members of the community interested in selling new/used items, crafts or collectibles. Table rentals are available for $10.00 each. To reserve a table please call Hélène at 388-4524. This is a fundraiser for the volleyball team's trip to Cuba. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

VICTORIA DOUKHOBOR CHOIR
Meets regularly on Sunday Evenings. Experience with Russian an Asset but not necessary. Everyone Welcome! For more Info Contact Andrei: 380-8386 or Johnny: 721-9269

The Victoria chapter of the Canada Tibet Committee will be holding a Walk for a Free Tibet on Saturday, March 5, starting at 12:30 at Centennial Sq. The walk will be to the Legislature with a rally there starting at about 1:00. In 1949 the army of the Peoples Republic of China invaded Tibet and began a brutally oppressive occupation that continues to this day.

Join the UVic Chess Club
Come and learn to play chess or improve your game. Club meets every Tuesday evening from 6:30-10 in the HSD building room A260. Contact dejamer@hotmail.com for more info. and put "chess" in subject box.

Theatre Inconnu Presents — in association with Human Motion Machine, **Tzara's Heart** Written and Directed by Ken Hudson. At the Little Fernwood Hall - 1923 Fernwood Road - across from the Belfry Theatre, Feb. 16 FREE preview @ 8pm Feb. 17 to Mar. 5: Wed through Sat (no show on Feb. 25) @ 8pm $10 general, $8 student/senior/unwaged, $5 under 16. Reserve & info: 360-0234

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Convertible futon frame, futon and attractive cover - $100.00, Computer desk - $50.00. Great condition! Telephone: 598-7256.

Women's Vasque hiking boots, made in Italy. Size 10, fits like a 91/2. New $400. selling for $100. My loss, your gain. 995-0303.

ROAD BIKE FOR SALE! Mongoose carbon fibre road bike w/shimano 105 and Ultegra components, Mavic rims, STI shifters, carbon forks. Call 477-0162 or email arm@uvic.ca

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If you don't like it—lick it before I stick it.

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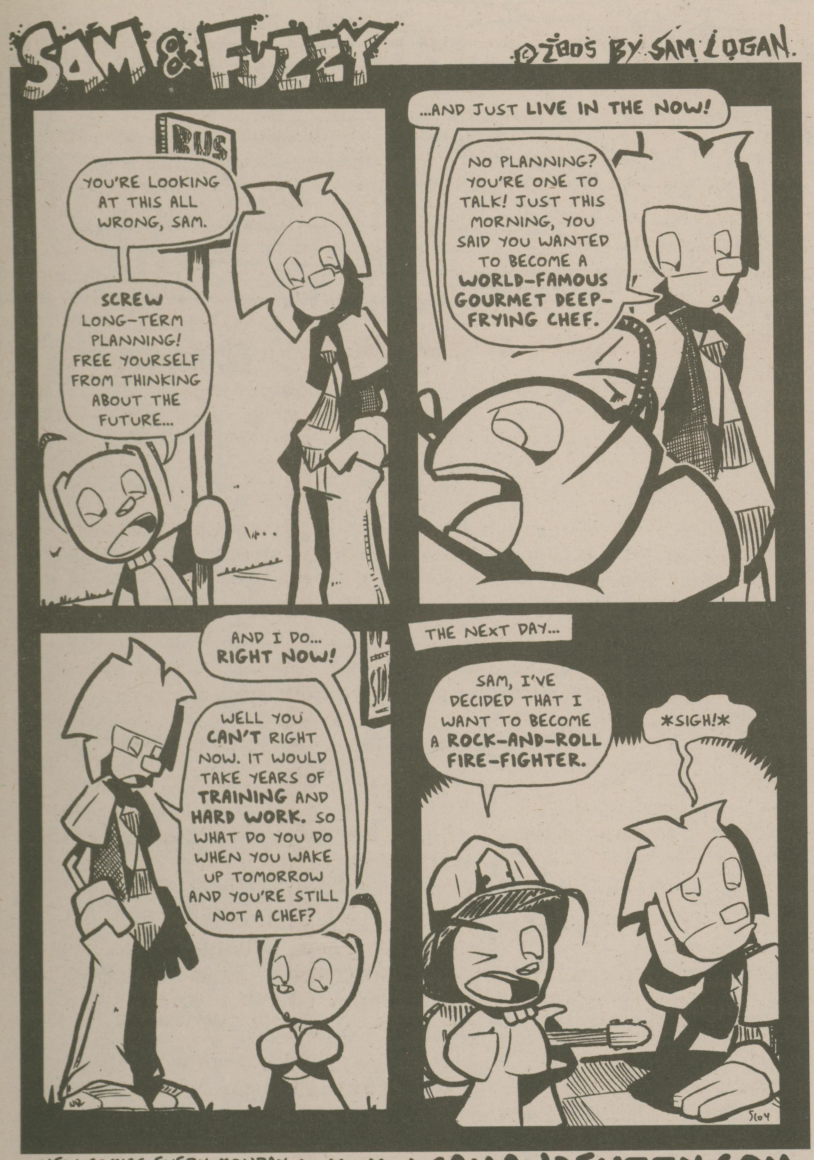
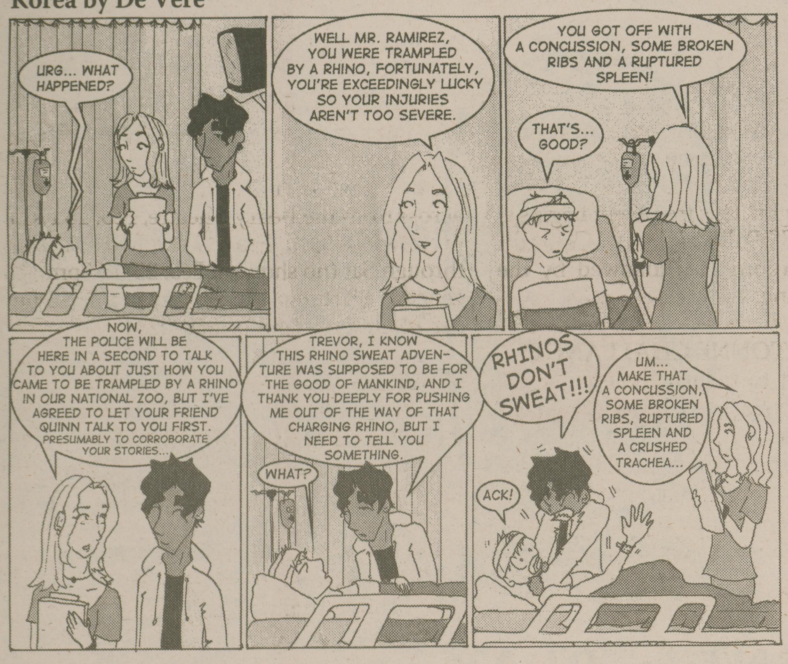
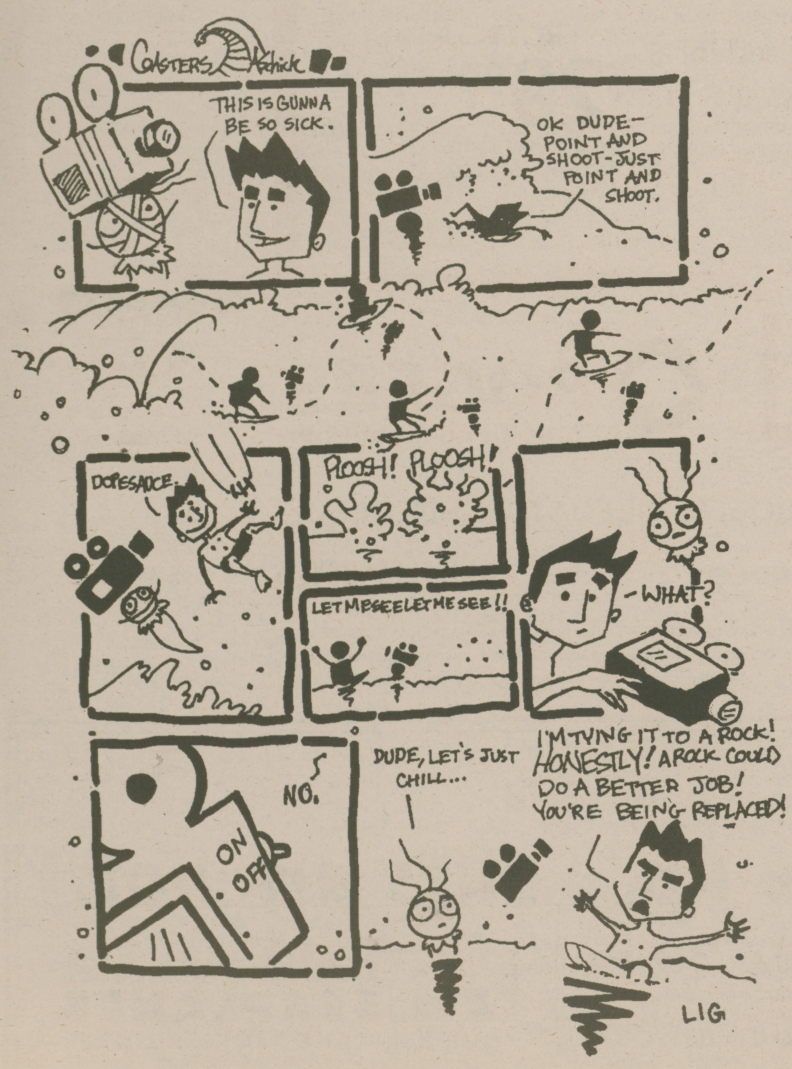
Students and clubs | $2/issue
Non-students | $2/line
Businesses | $6/line
Hey you! | free

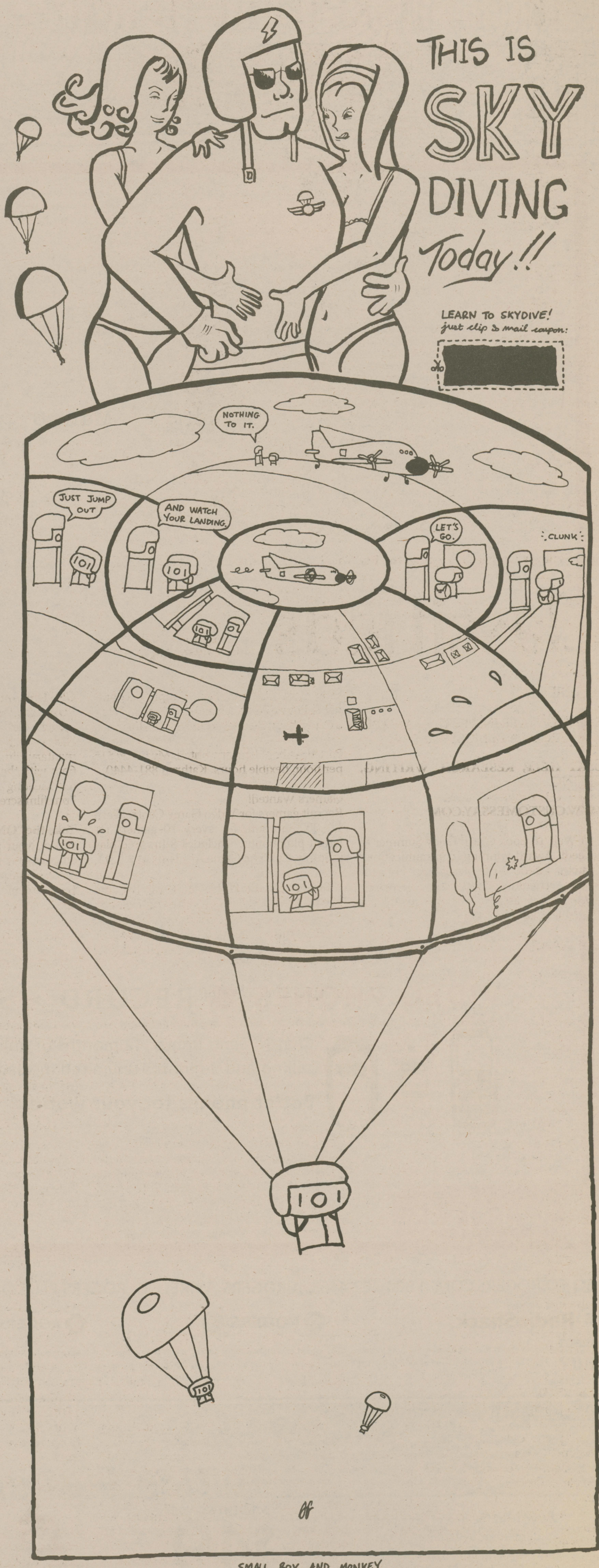

SAM & FUZZY
©2005 BY SAM LOGAN.
RUS
YOU'RE LOOKING AT THIS ALL WRONG, SAM.
SCREW LONG-TERM PLANNING! FREE YOURSELF FROM THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE...
...AND JUST LIVE IN THE NOW!
NO PLANNING? YOU'RE ONE TO TALK! JUST THIS MORNING, YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO BECOME A WORLD-FAMOUS GOURMET DEEP-FRYING CHEF.
AND I DO... RIGHT NOW!
WELL YOU CAN'T RIGHT NOW. IT WOULD TAKE YEARS OF TRAINING AND HARD WORK. SO WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU WAKE UP TOMORROW AND YOU'RE STILL NOT A CHEF?
THE NEXT DAY...
SAM, I'VE DECIDED THAT I WANT TO BECOME A ROCK-AND-ROLL FIRE-FIGHTER.
SIGH!

NEW COMICS EVERY MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY AT: **WWW.SAMANDFUZZY.COM**

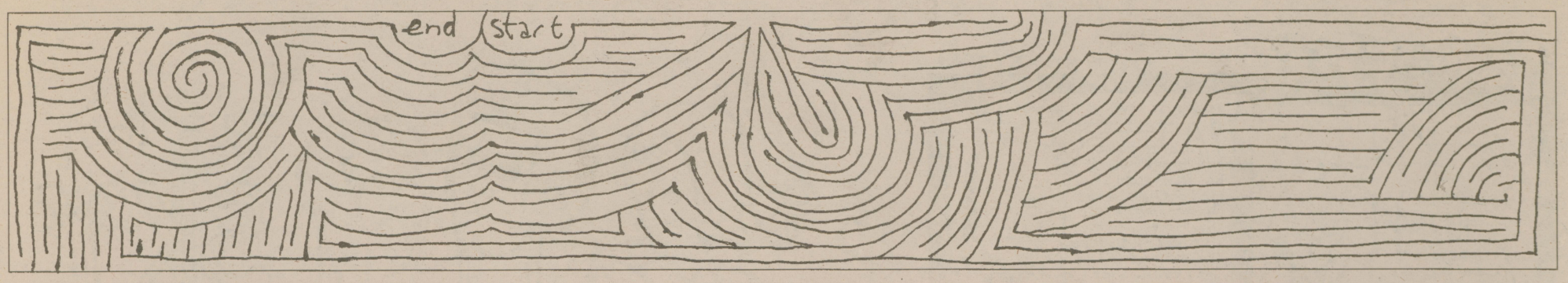
Korea by De Vere


URG... WHAT HAPPENED?
WELL MR. RAMIREZ, YOU WERE TRAMPLED BY A RHINO, FORTUNATELY, YOU'RE EXCEEDINGLY LUCKY SO YOUR INJURIES AREN'T TOO SEVERE.
YOU GOT OFF WITH A CONCUSSION, SOME BROKEN RIBS AND A RUPTURED SPLEEN!
THAT'S... GOOD?
NOW, THE POLICE WILL BE HERE IN A SECOND TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT JUST HOW YOU CAME TO BE TRAMPLED BY A RHINO IN OUR NATIONAL ZOO, BUT I'VE AGREED TO LET YOUR FRIEND QUINN TALK TO YOU FIRST.
PRESUMABLY TO CORROBORATE YOUR STORIES...
TREVOR, I KNOW THIS RHINO SWEAT ADVENTURE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND, AND I THANK YOU DEEPLY FOR PUSHING ME OUT OF THE WAY OF THAT CHARGING RHINO, BUT I NEED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.
WHAT?
RHINOS DON'T SWEAT!!!
UM... MAKE THAT A CONCUSSION, SOME BROKEN RIBS, RUPTURED SPLEEN AND A CRUSHED TRACHEA...
ACK!





SMALL BOY AND MONKEY



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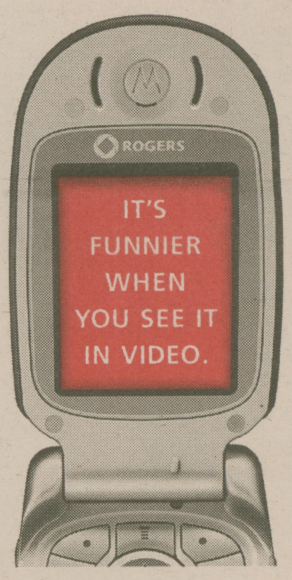

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